



# BELGIAN CONGO

# AT WAR

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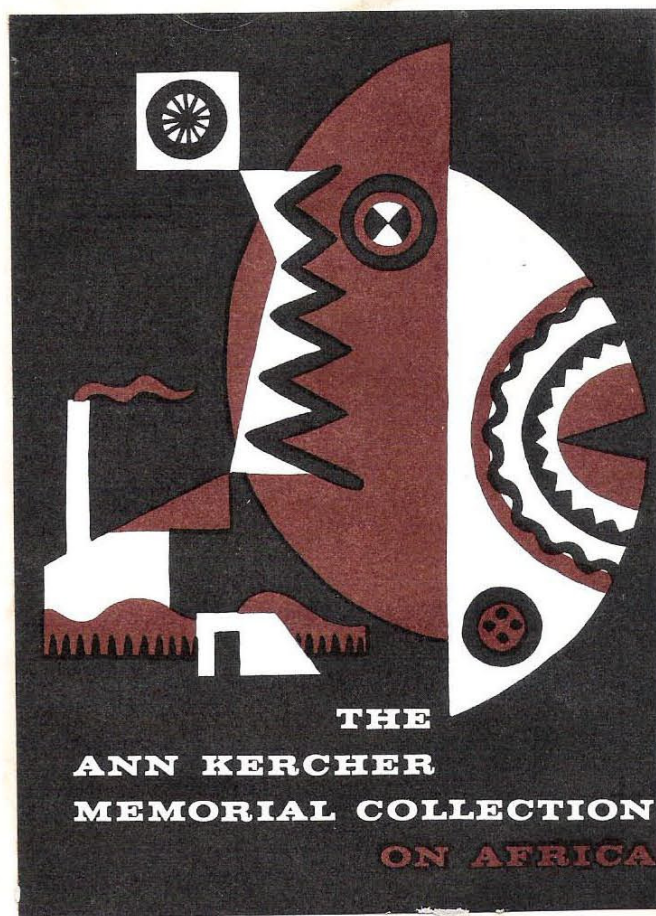






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# "A Primitive Mass of Natives" Becomes a Body of Loyal Colonial Citizens

Silence is such a beautiful and permanent thing that, whenever it is broken by the spoken word or by print, an excuse is called for: that is the origin of prefaces, introductions and forewords. Especially in wartime, when economy in every field is imperative, a reason should be given for every effort which, at first sight, does not seem indispensable.

The publication of this brochure is justified by the fact that the American public generally is not aware of the rôle the Belgian Congo is playing in the world conflict, and by another far more important fact, namely, that Belgium has assumed the white man's burden in a territory 80 times its own size and has achieved in four score years a work of civilization and progress to which practically all who know the Congo render homage. Under a regime of economic internationalization, Congo commerce has developed rapidly and the motherland Belgium has spared no sacrifices to increase the Congo's economic significance in world trade, although it was bound by the international status of its colony to deal on a perfectly equal basis with other peoples.

The well known American author, Negley Farson, states in *Behind God's Back* that: "The Belgians seem to have shown a great deal of uncommon good sense in handling their Congo problem."

The tremendous sacrifices Belgium has imposed upon itself to help the Congo native out of Arabian slavery and to deliver him from disease, have been rewarded by the loyalty and the devotion of the 15,000,000 Negroes in the Congo. Already in World War I, our Negro troops fought bravely and effectively against the Germans in Africa. The conquest of Tabora and the surrounding region was the culminating point of their forceful action. Today, the

populations of the former German colonies have not yet forgotten the treatment inflicted upon them by the "magnificent blond beasts of prey," for whose arrival Frederic Nietzsche longed so much. The colonial troops of the Belgian Congo readily gave their lives for their homeland and its white protectors. As Negley Farson wrote, "It is well to the credit of the Belgians that they have taken this very primitive mass of Congo natives and are, yearly and inevitably, giving them better living conditions and a practical education."

Again, in 1941, they went on the march against the Italian strongholds in Southern Abyssinia. More than 500 of them died on the burning plateaus of the Gala Sidamo region, but they conquered Asosa, Gambela and Saio, took 15,000 prisoners and swept the enemy from the entire region. Today they are ready for further action.

As the war moved on in the Far East, important production centers of valuable war materials were lost to the Allies, and the importance of the Belgian Congo as a producer of copper, tin, manganese, rubber, palm oil, fiber, etc., became more apparent. Since the 10th of May, 1940, the Belgian Congo has been staunchly on the side of the Allies. It has not wavered. The purpose of this brochure is to tell the American public how this African territory, as large as one third of the United States, is bracing itself to an ever-increased effort for the Allied victory. Too often this effort is ignored, sometimes it is minimized. The Belgian colonizers of the Congo had a double object: to combat ignorance and to repair injustice. To a certain extent, this brochure aims to do the same.

THE BELGIAN INFORMATION CENTER



# The Belgian Congo is at War and is Waging War

by ALBERT DE VLEESCHAUWER



*We are at war and we are waging war.*

*In the common strife, the Belgian Congo brings all it is, all it has, all it can.*

*Congo troops with Belgian officers and N. C. O.'s are on the march beyond the colony's frontiers and have distinguished themselves in no small manner in the Ethiopian campaign. More and still more troops and equipment will be available as, when and where they are needed.*

*The Congo transports and highways have been offered to the Allies. Already South African regiments have used them to join the battle lines.*

*In the all-important economic field also, the Belgian Congo has entered the service of the Allies. Its economic doc-*

*trine and practices have been rapidly adapted to the new conditions and, whilst everything is being done to maintain the potentiality of the Congo wealth, there is no hesitation whatsoever when it comes to sacrificing any riches in favor of the war effort.*

*Our contacts with the British Government are constant and the economic and financial treaties we signed with that Government are proof of our good will, just as is our military cooperation on land, on sea and in the air.*

*With the British colonies and Dominions our understanding is complete. In the course of my journeys to Africa, I paid good-neighbor visits to the Governors of Gambia, Sierra-Leone and Nigeria. In company with the Congo Governor-General and the chief of the Congo staff, I officially visited Kenya in order to show better than by speeches our will to act in perfect harmony with our Allies. At Nairobi we had conversations of a military and economic nature. In the Union of South Africa, I had highly useful meetings with that eminent statesman, General Smuts, to discuss various problems interesting our two countries. We reached an agreement on most of them and started preliminary negotiations towards a satisfactory solution for the others, always keeping in mind the will to better relations between the two countries and to further the all-out effort to win the war.*

*The moral and economic relations between the Belgian Congo and America have always been on a friendly footing. Today when, because of the Oriental and the European Nazis' aggression, the United States are in the war, these relations will be ever increasing. In that respect, the inauguration of the Congo Clipper Line is heartily welcome; it is also an omen for the war aftermath.*

*Through the various factors outlined which all converge towards unity with the Allies, through the important share taken up wholeheartedly by the Belgian Congo, we feel confident that we shall speedily obtain the liberation of our beloved Belgium and regain our freedom and independence.*







# The Belgian Congo's War Effort

by **PIERRE RYCKMANS**

Since the invasion of Belgium on May 10, 1940, the Belgian Congo has had but one object in life. All its problems have been rolled into one: how to contribute most effectively to the common allied victory.

The home army's surrender was felt in the Congo as a grave defeat, a sore trial—nothing more. It was regarded as purely military, with no political significance whatsoever. The King, as Commander in Chief of the army, shared the captivity of his men; but the Government, the country, the King himself, as head of the State, had not submitted to the invader. The capitulation of the *home* army involved, neither in fact nor in intent, the *colonial* army.

The French Government, in search of a scapegoat for the wrath of a disillusioned people; world opinion, without accurate sources of information, might interpret the surrender of May 28 as an abandonment of the alliance. In the Congo, no such mistake was made. The laying down of arms was not contemplated for an instant. By noon on that very 28th of May, even before the proclamation of the Belgian Government, the Leopoldville radio took the cue for the future: "The war is to go on." We went into it to defend our territory; there can be no question of getting out until our territory is won back.

The French armistice of June 23, 1940, remained for us still more definitely *res inter alios acta*, though its actual consequences were perhaps even more serious than those of the occupation of Belgium. At the outset of the invasion, the Belgian Government, the rear services for the army, the Departments of National Defense and of the Colonies, had been established in France. All young Belgians of military age had been evacuated to that country. All colonial activities had set up headquarters there. Every precaution seemed to have been taken so that, even with the mother country invaded, the life of the Colony could go on almost normally until the day of victory. The French collapse swept away all these precautions, and turned our defeat into disaster. The Congo found itself suddenly cut off for a number of weeks, detached from the Belgian Government deprived moreover of its freedom of action in France itself—out of touch with what remained of the Belgian army, with any of the organizing forces in Europe which directed its activities in times of peace, bereft of all support either military or civilian, obliged to go unaided, without the constant flow of fresh energy so necessary in a colony whose climate is debilitating. In 1914-18 the home army had fur-



nished three fourths of the European elements in the mobilized forces of the Congo, and had contributed largely to the civilian ranks in colonial administration as well.

No more than on the 28th of May, was there any thought of giving up the fight because of the French armistice; but all our plans of activity had to be revised and started again *ab ovo*.

With a total white population of less than thirty thousand, women and children included, and a third of that number belonging to other nationalities, we had to adapt ourselves to hold out for the duration of the war. The greatest possible force had to be mobilized, and our production reorganized to meet the needs of the Allied armies.

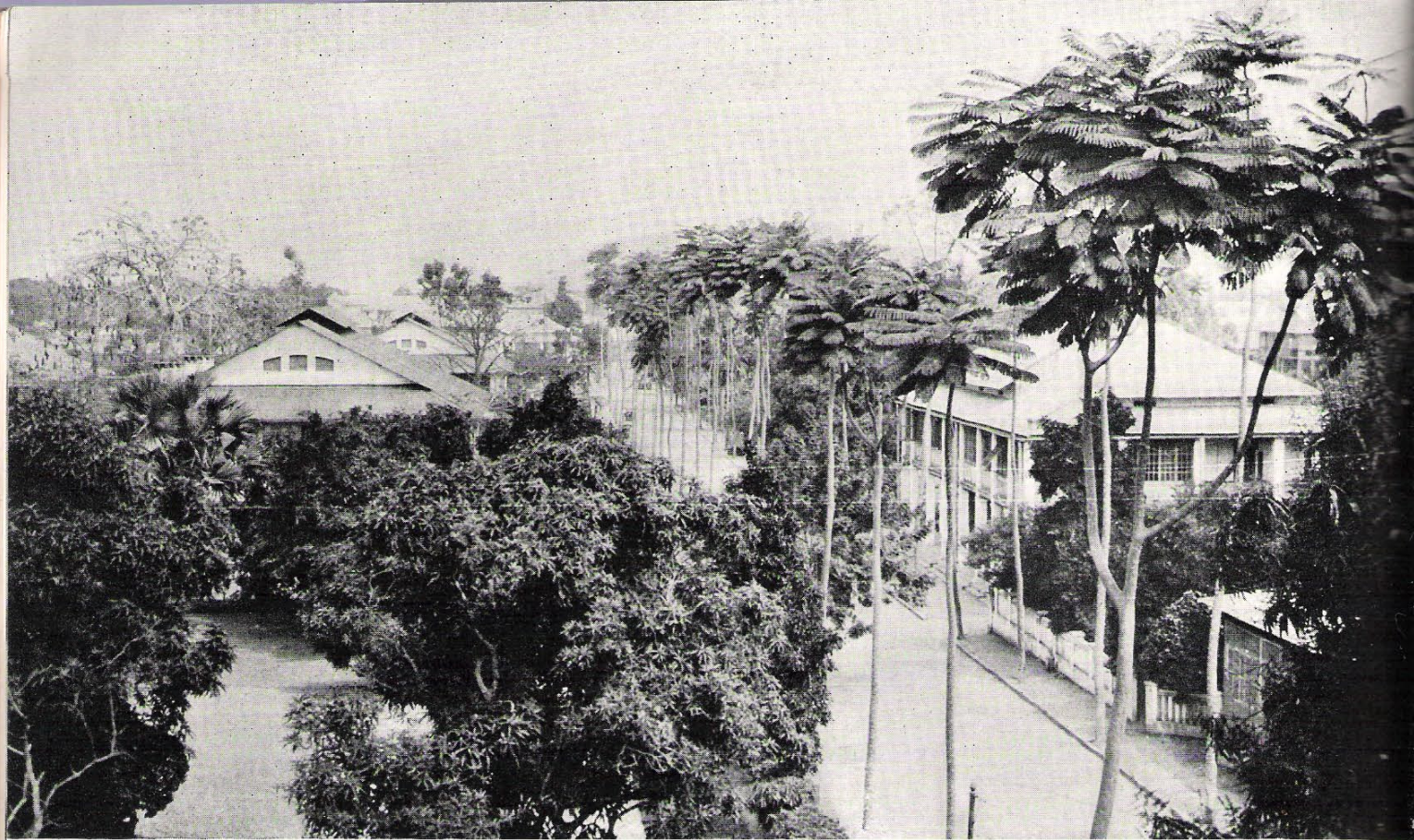
Palm oil, butter, and other palm products, coffee, cotton, and copal constituted almost half of our exports prior to the war. Now, almost fifty per cent of these products remained unsold. The port of Antwerp, which had taken three fourths of our exports, was now in enemy hands. Trade between the Congo and the United States, before the war, was all one-sided. We imported automobile parts and mineral oils; our exports in that direction were confined to a small amount of palm oil. In the three months from April to June 1941, we sent four hundred million francs worth of raw materials to the United States.

These few figures bear eloquent witness, I think, to the character and scope of our economic war effort, for it goes without saying that practically all the new American purchases go straight to plants for making munitions.

As for our military effort, the part played by Congo troops in the Abyssinian campaign has been revealed to the American public by war correspondent George Weller, of the Chicago Daily News, in terms which have filled all Belgians with pride. Our soldiers are ready to go wherever they are called.

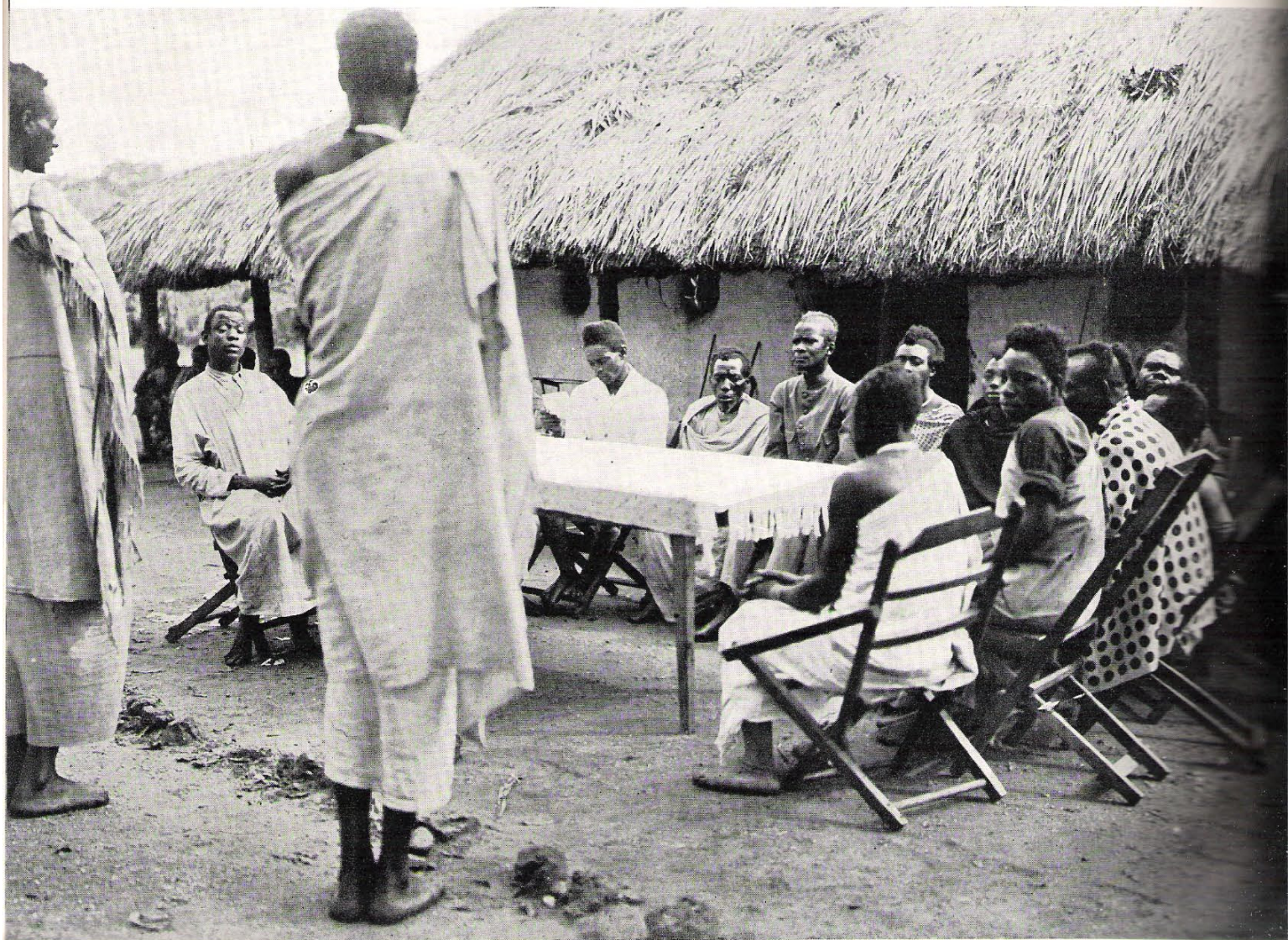
The extension of the war to the Pacific, involving the active participation of the United States, has again profoundly changed the aspects of the problem. But, in the full measure of our ability, wherever we may be called, we will answer: Present.





*View of Leopoldville, seen from the balcony of the A. B. C. Hotel.*

*Native chief administering justice*





# The Belgian Congo in the War

by **MAX HORN**

*Counselor of the Belgian Congo Government.*

## I.—The Political Status of Belgium Overseas.

It need hardly be recalled that in 1908 Belgium took over the sovereign rights, assets and commitments of the Congo Free State, at that time an independent country in personal union with the Kingdom of Belgium under the Belgian crown. An area of roughly one million square miles in the heart of Africa became the Belgian Congo Colony. After the World War—in 1925—the League of Nations entrusted a mandate to Belgium over the adjoining Ruanda-Urundi Territories, formerly two districts of German East Africa. The area of these Territories is comparatively small (about 25,000 square miles) but they are very thickly populated, the number of their inhabitants being estimated at over three million, while the population of the Congo Colony numbers somewhat less than 12 million. They are in all respects administered as a part of the Colony, although they have a separate treasury, the only practical distinction being that it is incumbent on the Congo Government to report on their progress to the League of Nations, and not only to the Belgian Parliament.

A uniform administration of the Colony and Territories was greatly facilitated by the fact that the humanitarian policies and liberal economic system prescribed by the League to Mandatory Powers were already in force in the Belgian Congo. The Belgian Act of Parliament of October 18, 1908, known as the Colonial Charter, lays down the fundamental lines on which the Belgian Possessions shall be governed. This Act embodies a Bill of Rights that safeguards the personal liberties of the people—the natives in particular. It affords equal opportunities to all in the matter of trade regardless of nationality, race or creed, and makes it a primary duty for the Government to promote the spiritual and physical welfare of the native population, notably through encouraging the spread of Christianity and scientific research.

Furthermore it sets out the Constitution of the Colony. Financially the Congo is a separate entity, distinct from Belgium. As regards legislation, the Congo Government is granted a wide autonomy, the only measures subjected to a vote of the Belgian Parliament being amendments to the Charter, foreign treaties, and the Colony's annual budget estimates and its ways and means. The debate on the budget affords Parliament an opportunity to discuss the conduct of the Congo Administration. At the head of this Administration stands the Minister of Colonies, who is assisted by a number of departmental officers and is at the same time a member of the Belgian Cabinet. Legislative enactments are issued in the form of Royal Decrees under the responsibility of the Minister of Colonies after they have been examined and reported on (except in cases of emergency) by the Colonial Council, an advisory body, some of whose

members are Government nominees (mostly retired high Congo officials), the others being appointed by Parliament. The Governor-General of the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi is subordinate to the Minister of Colonies but holds extensive executive powers and has authority to enact temporary legislative measures (Ordinances).

While the Belgian Government—at present established in London and comprising M. de Vleeschauwer, Minister of Colonies—remains responsible for the general policies of the Congo Colony and Ruanda-Urundi Territories, these lands—to which we shall refer as “the Congo” in the following paragraphs—form today an almost completely self-governing entity. When the Belgian Government declared that Italy having committed acts of war against Belgian nationals and Belgian interests, Belgium would take a corresponding stand against Italy, Belgium Overseas—the Congo—already at war with Germany since May 1940, became an active ally of Great Britain in every field. It is today associated fully and unreservedly with the United Nations.

Let us now outline the steps that have been taken with a view to maintaining and increasing the Colony's ability to further the common cause.

## II.—War Measures.

### (a) *Non-military safeguards against enemy action, and economic measures.*

Immediately after the outbreak of war—on May 10, 1940—the Governor General of the Congo ordered the internment of every male German national of military age, other German subjects being placed under supervision. At the same time German assets in the Congo were “blocked,” and officials appointed for their administration. A few days later, persons other than citizens of friendly countries were prohibited from circulating in the Colony without a permit. Since June 18, 1940, unauthorized gatherings in public places are forbidden.

Corporations formed under Belgian law and corporations formed under Congo law are authorized respectively by the Belgian Act of February 2, 1940 and the Congo Decree of February 19, 1940 to transfer their seats of operations in the event of war, and by the same enactments the control of their assets situated outside of an area under enemy influence is vested exclusively in their representatives resident outside of that area. Practically all corporations operating in the Congo, in which there are important Belgian, British or American interests, are today controlled from the Congo. In some instances it was found that the agents of a Corporation resident in the Colony were without adequate powers of attorney, while their Board of principals, being detained in Belgium, were unable to issue supplementary proxies. In order to remedy this difficulty, an Ordinance of



August 16, 1940 enables the Governor General to grant, at the request of a director or manager of a corporation, the powers of the Board, partners or shareholders to such persons and to such an extent as he may deem suitable. The Governor General has exercised this power in a number of instances.

Exports and imports are subjected to Government control, partly with a view to precluding direct or indirect trading with the enemy, and partly for monetary reasons, notably in order to strengthen the dollar holdings of the Sterling Area, as will be set out in the following chapter; but especially with a desire of husbanding essential goods of which the United Nations stand in need for other purposes. This consideration inspired an Ordinance of July 29, 1941, by which all enterprises are requested to furnish returns on metallurgical products in their possession and the Governor General is empowered to determine at his discretion the uses to which such products shall be applied.

While every effort is made to promote the output of strategic materials, the exportation of agricultural products is subjected to new regulations: at a time when the Congo is supplying foreign outlets with goods the bulk of which went to Belgium in pre-war years, the Government feels particularly justified in establishing stringent rules directed to uphold the good repute of the Colony's products; and there is a great economy of ocean tonnage thanks to these selective measures.

The Congo has a currency of its own, distinct from that of Belgium; but for reasons of convenience, the gold equivalent of the Congo franc was fixed in 1926 at one-fifth of the belga's gold equivalent. Immediately after the German aggression, the Belgian Government entered into a monetary arrangement with Britain and France, whose currencies at the time were stabilized in regard to each other. This agreement fixed a standard rate of exchange of 24 belgas to the English pound sterling, and a corresponding ratio between the belga and the French franc. The Congo Government substituted the same parities for the Congo franc in lieu of its previous gold equivalent. In the first days of June 1940, at the pressing request of the French authorities, the belga was devaluated to the level of the French franc, and its parity with sterling was consequently reduced to 35.325 belgas to the pound. Under the same pressure the Congo Government reluctantly followed suit, enacting that the Central Bank of the Colony—"Banque du Congo Belge" or Congo Bank—would thenceforth base its buying and selling rates for foreign currencies on a parity of 176.625 francs to the English pound. (With a rate of exchange of about four dollars to the pound, the dollar is roughly equivalent to 44 Congo francs.) Whereas in normal times a strongly favorable balance of trade made it easy to maintain the external value of the Congo franc at whatever parity the Government might consider advisable, facilities generously granted by the Bank of England put the Congo Bank in a position to effect without interruption all remittances abroad required by the Colony during the short period of confusion that followed the French Armistice. Very soon, however, new outlets were found for the

Congo's main products, and this expansion of exports, coupled with a severe governmental control of imports, enabled the Colony not only to cover its own requirements in foreign currencies but also to finance the Treasury of the Belgian Government-in-Exile.

Under an Ordinance of May 14, 1940 the Congo Bank—a private chartered institution under Government supervision—is granted a monopoly in foreign exchange dealings all foreign currencies derived from exports after that date being placed at its disposal. The Congo Bank controls, and is responsible for, the entire currency circulation of the Colony, specie as well as notes. Coins other than gold are treated in all respects as metallic banknotes; this is a distinctive feature of the Congo's monetary system. Despite the devaluation to which the monetary unit was subjected in June 1940 and the subsequent adjustment of prices, the amount of currency in circulation shows a relatively small increase. On the other hand bank deposits are accumulating, in unprecedented figures, pending the post-war discharge of commitments towards creditors and stockholders in occupied Belgium. The counterpart of these deposits consists mainly in corresponding sterling holdings of the Congo Bank.

Individual and corporate incomes are subjected to heavy excess-profit taxes and war taxes; and profiteering is curbed by an Ordinance of April 30, 1941, which enables the local Authorities to fix maximum prices for staple articles. Only a "normal" margin of profit may be charged, cost of replacement being taken into account.

Producers of useful goods or services are debarred from spending and investing as they might wish by the watchful severity of the Congo Import and Exchange Controls, and their earnings are limited. Yet there is no sign of their relaxing their efforts to satisfy both the increased local needs and the growing requirements of the United Nations abroad. Mining and manufacturing plants are working 24 hours a day on week-days; though some, it must be admitted, are in operation for only 12 hours on Sundays.

#### (b) *Military Measures.*

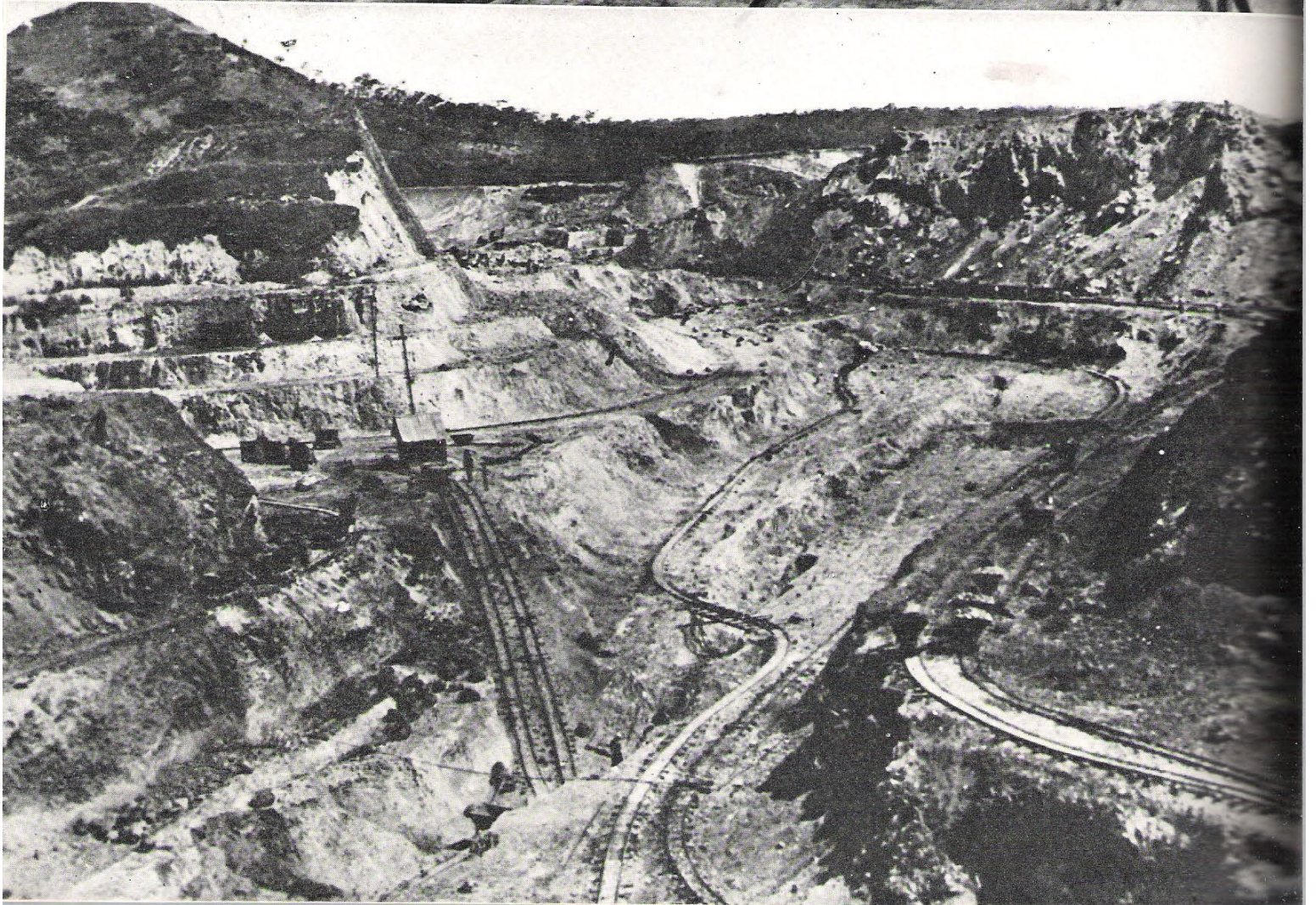
It would not be proper to enlarge here on the importance and location of the Congo's armed forces and their equipment. In the first World War, after Germany had attacked the Colony from her adjoining possessions in violation of the treaties that guaranteed its neutrality, Congo armies successfully carried the fight into enemy territory, the native troops and carriers displaying conspicuous bravery, hardiness and loyalty under the leadership of their white officers. They have shown that they are still made of the same metal.

At the outbreak of the present war, the Congo forces were mobilized. On May 14, 1940 the Governor General invited natives to enlist. On May 17th, he advised the (white) "voluntary territorial guards" that they must hold themselves in readiness. These guards were incorporated in the Army, on October 10th. Three weeks later all Belgians between the ages of seventeen and thirty-six not previously enrolled in the Army were drafted into "training courses."











The native personnel of transportation services has been militarized since June 20, 1941.

Since the end of June 1940, the Congo Government has been in consultation with British naval and military authorities. General de Gaulle was given a hearty welcome at Leopoldville. While the Congo Army is not connected with the Free French Legions the Colony furnishes them with important supplies.

The notable part which the Congo Army took in the Abyssinian campaign is set out in another article in this booklet. More may be heard shortly of its participation in the fight against dictatorial powers.

In December last Pan-American Airways instituted an air-service between the United States of America and the Congo. This means a closer collaboration between this country and the Belgian Colony in every field.

### III.—Aid to the United Nations.

The Congo forces have proved to be a factor in the allied military array, but the Colony's economic resources are perhaps of greater immediate importance.

When Belgium entered the war, the Belgian Government decided to place these resources unreservedly at the disposal of the Allies. Moreover, a number of the best Belgian ships which regularly traveled between Antwerp and the Congo, were directed to carry Congo products to French and British ports. When Antwerp fell into the hands of the aggressor, Bordeaux was selected as the most convenient port from which to effect distribution, and arrangements for supplies were negotiated with the French and British Purchasing Commissions. The French Armistice caused the Congo Administration to center its efforts on supplies to Britain.

A provisional understanding was soon reached between M. de Vleeschauwer, in behalf of the Belgian Government, and the British Authorities. The United Kingdom would operate at its discretion all Belgian shipping, and it would receive such portion of the Congo's exportable products as it desired. On the other hand the Congo would be treated in the British Empire "as one of the family," and practically enjoy the privileges of Imperial Preference in the United Kingdom. Included in the Sterling Area, the Congo granted the British Treasury a call on such of its gold and dollar holdings as would from time to time exceed its own requirements and those of the Belgian Government. These arrangements were confirmed in a formal agreement signed on January 21, 1941, which notably specified the quantities of the various products to be delivered to the United Kingdom. Practically the entire output, for example, of copper, edible palm-oil and diamonds (the Congo is the world's largest producer of industrial diamonds, an important war material) accrues to the United Kingdom while the bulk of the Colony's timber production—varieties particularly suitable for the erection of barracks—is shipped to the Union of South Africa. A visit paid last year by M. de Vleeschauwer to Fieldmarshal Smuts brought about a substantial increase in the volume of goods and services ex-

changed between the Union and the Congo, and shipments notably of cotton have gone to India and Australia.

At the same time the Congo's trade with the United States and Canada rapidly expanded. Through their purchases of Congo products as well as through their supplies of goods to the Congo, the United States and Canada are indirectly aiding Britain: they contribute to sustain the Colony's activities, avert unemployment and dissatisfaction amongst the native population, and enable the Congo to devote its energies and resources to the production of desirable commodities. Incidentally the United States is giving further aid to Britain through replenishing the dollar holdings of the Sterling Area by its purchases, and through refining Congo ores in Britain's behalf. In return the Congo is materially furthering the war effort of the United States through providing increasing quantities of strategic metals—such as tin, cobalt, manganese, zinc, cadmium, etc.—and important vegetable products—such as palm-oil, fibres, and gum copal.

In recognition of the Congo's contribution towards the attainment of the common goal, and indeed with a view to rendering this contribution possible, the English, South African, Canadian and American Authorities have given and are giving liberal consideration to the requirements of the Colony in regard to essential supplies and maritime transportation. The Belgian Congo Purchasing Commission instituted at the New York offices of the Belgian Embassy in order to recommend justified applications for priority rating certificates, export licenses and Treasury licenses in behalf of prospective importers of goods to the Congo, gratefully acknowledges the understanding and efficient support it has found at Washington and Ottawa.

### IV.—The Congo Carries On.

Before the invasion of Belgium the Congo was consigning more than four-fifths of its exports to the mother country (where they entered free of duty), and it derived from Belgium nearly one-half of its imports (although Belgian suppliers were enjoying no preferential treatment). Trade between the Congo and other European countries accounted almost entirely for the remaining percentages, the most notable exception being imports of cotton goods from Japan. In 1938, exports to the U. S. amounted to \$1,550,000 and imports from the U. S., to \$1,875,000, totalling little more than 1% of the Colony's external trade.

Under present conditions the Congo must turn to new outlets, and new sources of supply. A spell of deep anxiety followed the French Armistice. Fortunately the Colony was well stocked with imported consumption goods. Indeed, until recently, the only form of rationing the Government found it necessary to establish—in a single Province—was that of infant goods, which under an Ordinance of August 5, 1940, could be delivered only on medical prescription (this to be furnished gratis). Today sales of motor vehicles and tires are restricted to essential needs.

The arrangements with Britain referred to in the preceding chapter brought immediate relief. A few senior officials of the Belgian Colonial Office, who had succeeded in escaping from territories under Nazi control, joined M.



de Vleeschauwer in London, where the Central Administration of the Colony is fulfilling its functions with an extremely reduced staff—in curious contrast with the usual war-time expansion of Government departments. With the help of these services, trade relations between the United Kingdom and the Congo soon developed. Besides, some of the principal undertakings operating in the Colony already had close business connections in England, and ever since the first World War, a branch of the Congo Bank has been established in London. Simultaneously, the South African market was approached, as we have mentioned, and an agency of the Congo Government was instituted in New York with the special duty of promoting trade with the United States and Canada. Practically every Congo concern is now represented in New York or Montreal, banking transactions passing mainly through the Banque Belge pour l'Etranger (Overseas) Ltd. or the Bank of Manhattan in the United States, and the Canadian Bank of Commerce in the Dominion. The Congo's external trade has more than regained its pre-war volume.

In particular, monthly exports to the United States (exclusive of re-exports) rose from about \$600,000 on an average in the first half year of 1940 to about \$2,700,000 in 1942. Imports from the United States averaged approximately \$850,000 a month during the past year, but the f.o.b. cost of these purchases is roughly equalled by "invisible imports:" ocean freights (shipments in both directions being carried almost exclusively on vessels owned or chartered by American companies), insurance, commissions, treatment of Congo ores in American refineries for re-exportation, etc.

In times such as the present, when production capacity is strained to the utmost and still falls short of the demand, the supplier rather than the customer bestows favors on the other party. There is a world scarcity in practically every variety of the Congo's exportable products, and the Colony's problem today is not so much to find outlets as to maintain and increase its output in order to meet, so far as it is able, the needs of the United Nations. Obviously the program can only be fulfilled provided the Congo receives from abroad such equipment and consumer goods as it needs for performing its task. Mutual aid spells mutual sacrifices.

The Congo is accomplishing its part with a stubborn will, unceasingly stimulated by the Government, to add whatever it may be able to the common resources. The Administration and the white officers of the producing enterprises are overworked. Many on the staff—particularly the younger engineers—are drafted; their remaining colleagues cannot now as in normal times take their vacations in Europe; they cannot be replaced by newcomers from Belgium. The natives too are working harder, although the trade goods which are their main inducement for working have become scarce and dear. Ore reserves are being depleted and poorer deposits developed regardless of cost. Industrial plants are being extended or newly erected with a view to hus-

banding materials and shipping. The local cotton mills will soon provide for the entire requirements of the Congo Forces and largely for those of the Free French. Scrap formerly neglected is being re-utilized, repair shops are springing up, tools and spares are being manufactured locally, and refineries are improving ores which before the war were exported in a cruder state. A rapid industrialization of the Congo is in progress.

Yet, apart from this strain on the people's energy, life in the Congo is almost "as usual."

A notice in the Administrative Bulletin reminds those who are able to take a vacation that "the Tourist Office gives all information concerning the condition of the roads, hotels, garages, etc." The local papers continue to advertise picture shows; social gatherings are calling forth most generous responses to appeals for patriotic and charitable subscriptions. Nor does the Government relinquish its efforts for the well-being of its natives. Recent ordinances contain a number of instructions directed to counter malaria and sleeping sickness, avoid soil-erosion and ensure cleanliness in the village streets (the natives are also told that they are not allowed to house cattle inside their huts). The fight against the abuse of drugs (hemp smoking) as well as against diseases is pursued unabatingly. The Governor General, Pierre Ryckmans, remains true to the policy outlined in a book which he published a few years ago under the characteristic title: "Rule in Order to Serve."

The white population of the Congo has risen from 26,000 before the war to about 40,000: Government officials and traders had their families in Europe join them when transit through France and Spain was still practicable, and company officers formerly resident in Belgium have gone over to the local managements. Yet the aborigines remain in an overwhelming majority. May it be mentioned here that the small proportion of white residents is a consequence of the policy persistently followed by the Congo Government not to encourage white men to settle in the Colony unless they are able to perform a given task materially better than would a trained native: the Congo natives have first title to any job they are able to fill.

As specialization develops in the production of goods and services, the call for specialists in every trade and branch of knowledge increases. The Belgian Congo is open to men of good-will and ability whatever their nationality, and the closer ties that are developing between the Congo on the one side and the British Empire and the United States on the other are of a lasting nature.

However, the Congo remains essentially Belgian. It constitutes for Belgium the vast field—98 per cent of her territory, free today from enemy occupation—in which she can proudly contribute towards the betterment of the world. In the present war it affords her an invaluable addition to her capacity to fight in the cause of human liberty as one of the United Nations.



# The Belgian Congo is Rich in Natural Resources

by **JAMES G. WHITELEY**

*Consul General of Belgium,*

*Former Consul General of the Independent State of the Congo.*

The Belgian Colony in Africa was founded by Leopold the Second, King of the Belgians, nearly three-quarters of a century ago. The King built better than he knew. Today this African whelp of the Belgian lion is fighting "all-out" for the liberation of his wounded and imprisoned parent in Europe, and is rendering valuable assistance to the Allied cause.

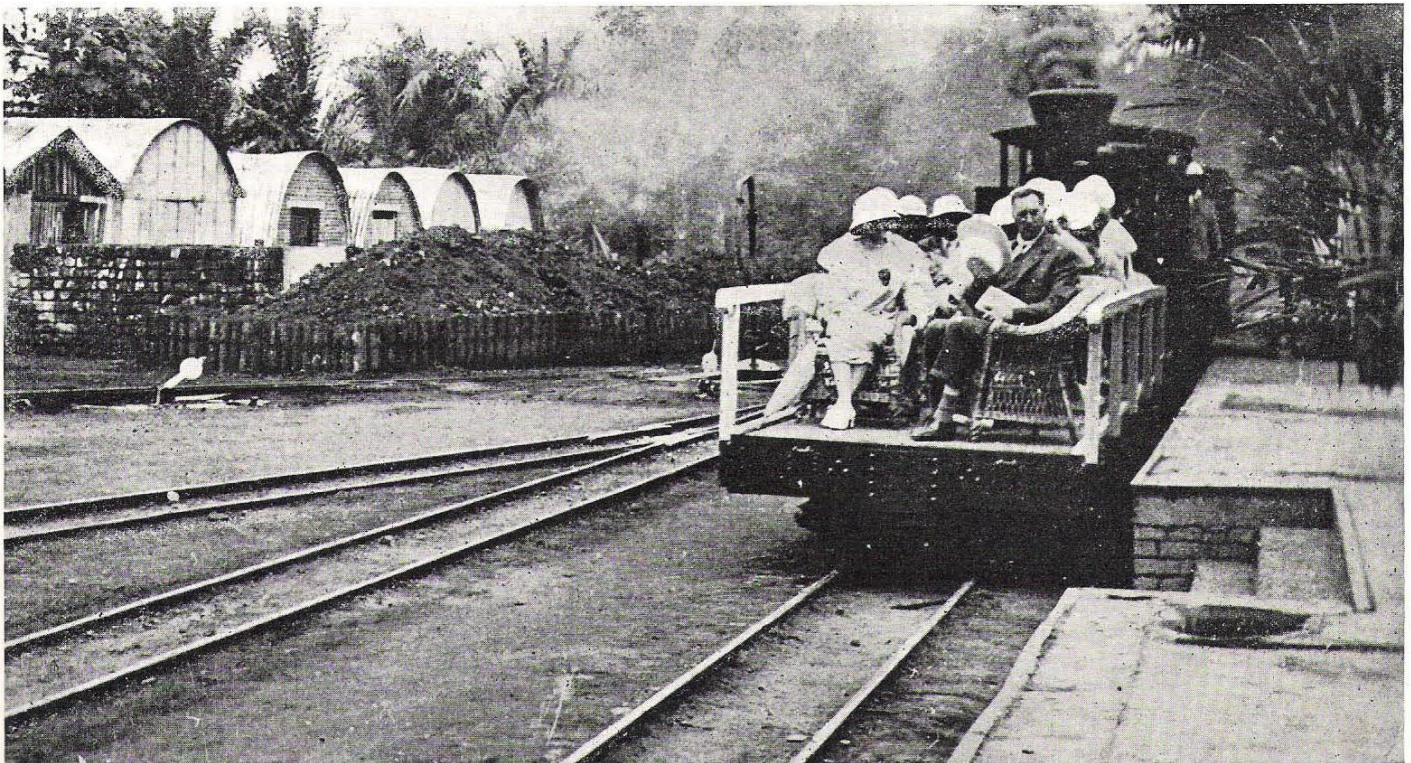
Until the 19th century the central part of the African continent was a mysterious and unexplored area. Various sea-going European nations had established trading posts along the sea coasts, but none of them had ventured into the heart of the continent, which was called "Darkest Africa," and was supposed to contain nothing but cannibals, wild and warlike tribes, and savage animals. Scientific geographers knew little about the African continent, and, as the poet remarked: "Geographers, on Africa's maps, with

savage pictures fill their gaps, and o'er unhabitable downs place elephants instead of towns."

That astute monarch, Leopold II, King of the Belgians, was more enterprising. Here were about one million square miles of territory, unexplored, uncivilized, given over to heathenism and inter-tribal wars, and subject to the raids of the Arab slave traders who distributed this human product in bondage throughout the world.

King Leopold was a man of action as well as of foresight. He decided that something should be done. In September 1876, he called an International Geographical Conference at Brussels, to which all nations were invited. At the opening meeting, the King announced that the object of the conference was: "To open to civilization the only part of our world where it has not yet penetrated, to pierce the darkness which covers the minds of all these popula-

*King Albert aboard one of the first trains in the Congo during his visit to the Colony.*





tions. I dare say that it is a crusade worthy of this century of progress."

As a result of the conference, a committee was formed under the name: The International African Association, in which the other nations were invited to participate. Many of them were rather lukewarm, and it fell to King Leopold, aided by a handful of Belgians, to carry on the enterprise almost alone, and almost entirely at the King's personal expense. As the Prince of Wales (afterward King Edward the Seventh) remarked: "Leopold is likely to ruin and impoverish himself by his fantastic philanthropic ideas."

During the following years, King Leopold devoted his great genius to the development of the Congo. It was a formidable undertaking and fortunately a "one-man job," for, as Count de Lesseps remarked on one occasion: "If there is anything important to do, and there are two of you to do it, there is one too many." King Leopold had been the Big Boss—an absolute Monarch, without any control by the Belgian Parliament.

Finally, in 1908, after he had put his African possessions in good shape and in proper running order, he presented it, as a free gift, to the Belgian people, and it became a colony of Belgium under the name of the Belgian Congo.

The Belgian Congo occupies an area of about 920,000

square miles—equal to about one-third of the United States, and about eighty times the size of Belgium. The native population is estimated at somewhat more than ten million, and the present white population (chiefly Belgians), at approximately thirty thousand. The country is extremely rich in natural resources, both mineral and vegetable. Among the mineral products are: copper, gold, diamonds, tin, cobalt, radium, silver and coal. The vegetable products include: palm oil, cotton, coffee, cocoa, hard woods, rubber, jute cane sugar and sesame.

Since the annexation of the Congo to Belgium, the development of these products, as well as the care, education, and physical welfare of the natives, has been the constant concern of Leopold II's successors, King Albert and King Leopold III, both of whom made personal visits to the Congo. As our present King is a prisoner in the hands of the Germans, the administration of the Belgian Congo devolves upon the Belgian Government-in-Exile at London, and especially upon the Belgian Minister of Colonies, Mr. de Vleeschauwer, and his representative in the Congo, Governor General Ryckmans.

All the production of material useful for war supplies goes exclusively to the United States and the British Empire.

*Isiro, a bathing resort near the borders of the Haut Ituri.*





# The United States helped to found Belgian Congo

A few hours before his death, King Leopold II, at the last audience he gave his prime minister, said: "If you yield so much as an inch of the Congo, your old King will rise from his grave to blame you."

On the brink of death, in a palace, the garden of which sheltered immense greenhouses filled with strange African plants, the King remembered the great adventure of his life, his dreams of vast colonial possessions which had become a reality.

He was only twenty when, addressing an assembly, in 1855, he bluntly told the Belgians "to have a broad vision of world affairs" and he suggested the creation of long maritime lines. Five years later he invited his country to lose no time "if we do not want to see all the best positions, already scarce enough, occupied by other nations more enterprising." Thereafter he waged a written campaign, either writing himself or inspiring other writers, in favor of Belgian colonies, and when he became King (1865) he scanned the map of the world to find a region which had not been annexed by any country.

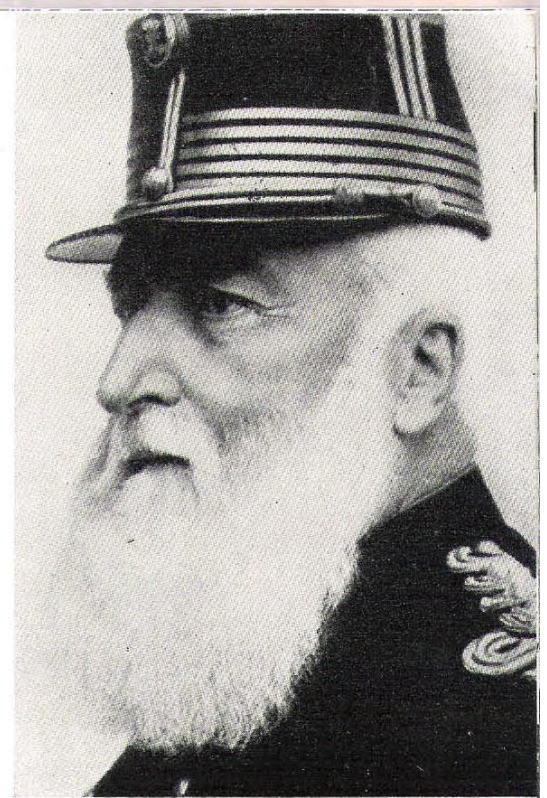
That very year, an American, Dr. Livingstone, was exploring Central Africa, whose vast expanses were still mysterious and where savage populations were being decimated by Arab slave-traders. After having pushed as far as Lake Tanganyka, Livingstone disappeared. Gordon Bennett, owner of the New York Herald, sent a reporter, the Anglo-American Henry M. Stanley, to find him. The two explorers finally met and Stanley's adventures were widely publicized in America and Europe, through the New York Herald.

The most avid reader of Stanley's reports was Leopold II. Later he read Livingstone's heartrending stories of African slavery. The King's mind was made up: he would assume the task of stamping out slavery and would, at the same time, give an African colony to Belgium.

In 1876, he called an international conference in Brussels, and the "International Association for the Abolition of the Slave Trade" was formed under the King's chairmanship.

However, political difficulties soon piled up and what was now known as the "International Congo Association" had no standing in international law. Leopold II had to negotiate with France about a claim on the mouth of the Congo River. Then Portugal, with the support of England,

*King Leopold II,  
founder of the  
Belgian Congo.*



put in a series of claims which threatened the whole Belgian undertaking. Leopold II acted with such diplomacy that both France and Germany refused to recognize the Portuguese claims and in the end the British government withdrew its support of the Portuguese.

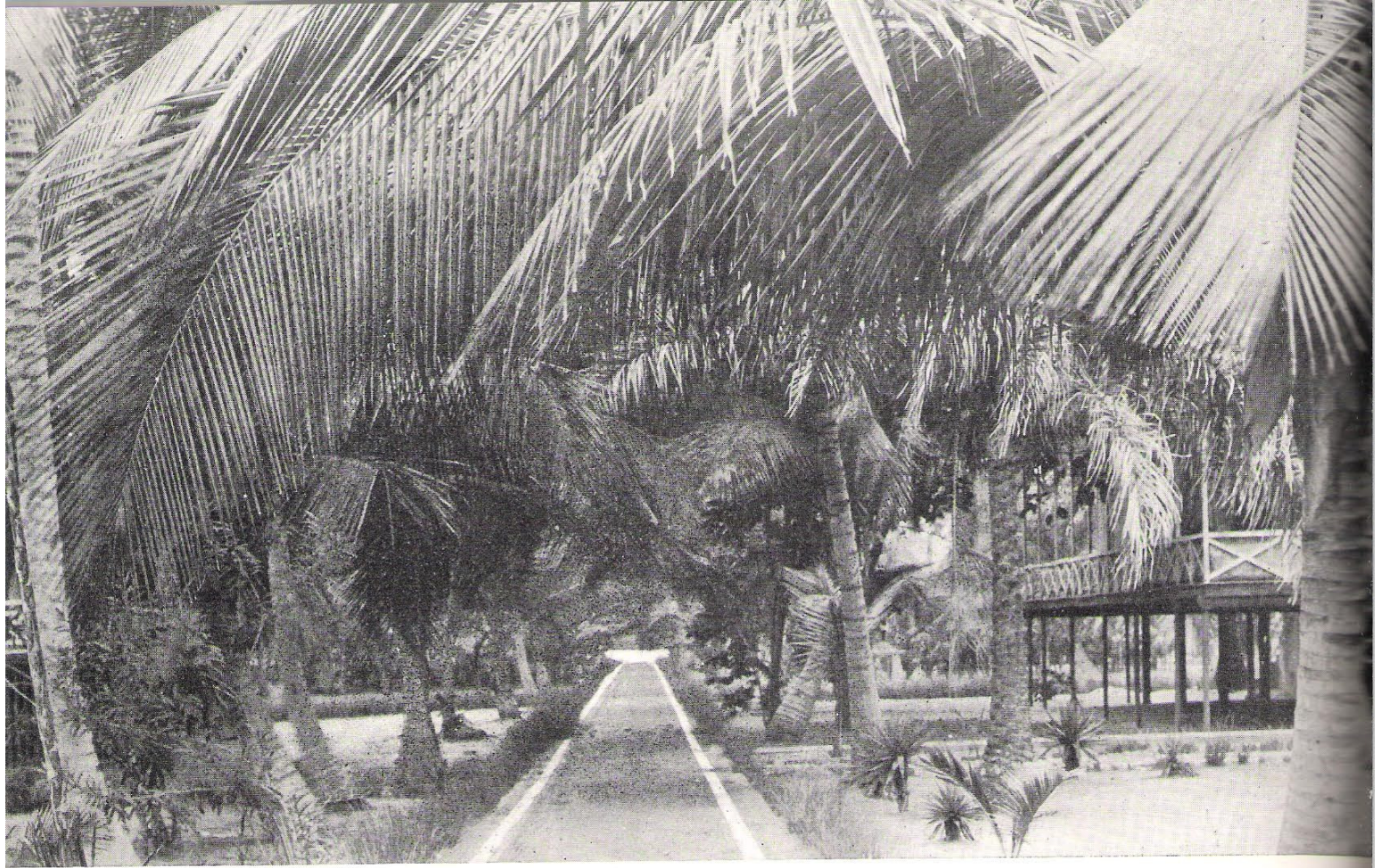
Finally, the United States of America stepped in. On April 10, 1884, the American Government officially recognized the Brussels Association. Thanks to that strong moral help, all political difficulties disappeared. In quick succession, the various European countries admitted the King's peaceful conquest and on February 26, 1885, an International Conference meeting at Berlin recognized the "Congo Free State" under the sovereignty of Leopold II.

The act of Berlin "proclaimed" freedom of trade and of navigation in the Congo basin, excluded all preferential treatment, granted identical commercial and civil rights to foreigners and nationals.

The Congo became, under the King's rule, a colony open to all; nationalism and tariff walls were—and still are—excluded. The slave trade was abolished. Catholic and Protestant missionaries preached the Gospel to the blacks. Hardy pioneers enthusiastically seconded the work of the King. However, the sovereign was bitterly criticized by some people. One of his most violent detractors was Sir Roger Casement, the traitor who was hanged by the British during World War I.

In 1889, the King willed to Belgium the new African Empire but violent and unfair campaigns were launched both against Leopold's administration and the handing over of the Congo to Belgium. However, in 1908, the Belgian Parliament accepted the King's gift. Belgium now possessed a vast and rich colony.





*The main and only street in a village of the Congo jungle.*

*The Mungini Mai (Water village) tribe live in their 60 boats which congregate in the evening at a spot previously agreed upon.*





# Belgian Colonial Policy

King Albert, at the time of his accession, on the 23rd of December, 1909, stated:

"Having a proper sense of her duty, and the means to carry it out, Belgium has mapped out her own course, and intends to keep to it. It entails a policy of humanity and progress. To a nation, whose only aim is justice, the mission of colonization can only be a mission of high civilization; a small nation proves its greatness by carrying it out faithfully."

Belgium has kept her word.

The work of colonization has been carried out methodically. The Belgian and Foreign missions have a staff, which at present exceeds three thousand teachers and educators, who give instruction and education to over 1,500,000 Christians, and to more than one million catechumens, training many of them to act as assistants among their colored brethren.

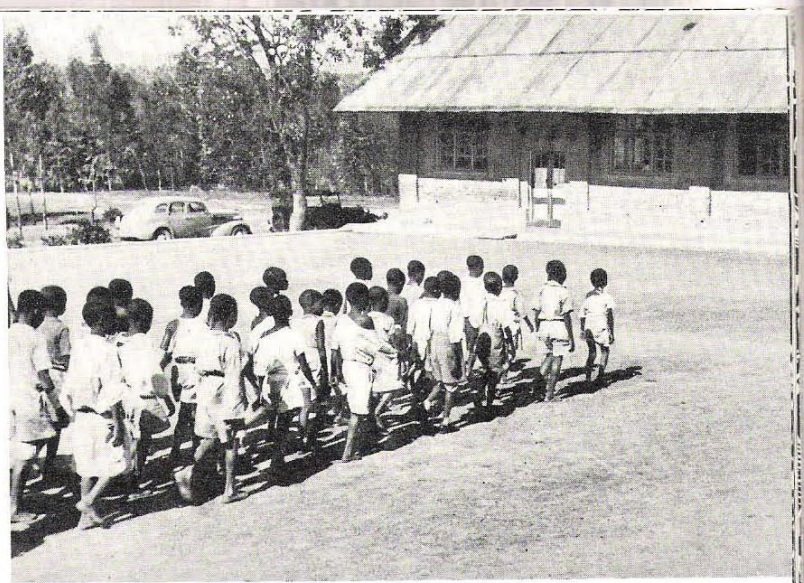
All the mission stations are busy evangelizing the natives, besides educating them, and teaching them the rudiments of hygiene. They also till plantations, and go in for cattle breeding.

Instruction is given to both European and native pupils. Classes for European pupils have been organized in many important towns. As far as the native pupils are concerned, schools have been opened for them in the most important centers of colonization. They are being taught in collaboration with the mission stations. There are now 300,000 black pupils attending 5,000 schools.

Besides their military instruction, the native soldiers attend trade schools, where lectures are given in workshops and schoolrooms. This is done to enable them to obtain work in private concerns after their demobilization.

The Colony has undergone a great change as far as hygiene is concerned. Social centers and medical clinics have sprung up everywhere, broadcasting instruction on health topics. The government, private enterprises, and the Congo Red Cross Society (Foréami) have taken useful prophylactic measures; medical attendance in the bush territories is also organized.

Rail and water transport services connect the most important places of the Colony. The "Federation of Transport Services" (Comité de Coordination des Transports), grouping the representatives of all the companies interested in transport throughout the colony, has made some very fortunate decisions which are having a favorable influence on the carrying trade. The network of communications is being dealt with in another chapter of this brochure.

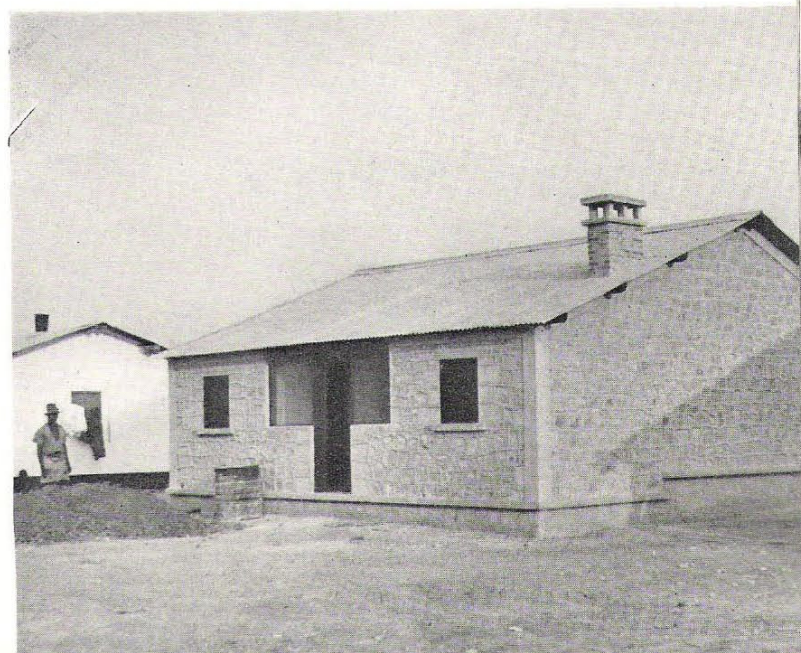


*Each mine in Katanga has its particular native settlement with schools native children and all modern institutions to take care of the native population.*



*The Belgian Congo Bank at Leopoldville.*

*A native worker's house*





The total length of navigable waterways is 21,000 miles. This includes the network of rivers formed by the Congo and its tributaries, the lakes, etc. They are open to steamer traffic. The Colony possesses four seaports: Banana, Boma, Ango-Ango and Matadi.

The outside harbors are provided with up-to-date appliances, and all conveniences for bringing steamers and mail-ships into port.

The principal vegetable products now produced in a scientific way are: palm oil and nuts, copal, sesamum, cotton, rubber, bindweeds, cocoa, coffee, precious wood, tanning barks, castor oil, kola nuts, tobacco, rice, maize, sorghum, vanilla, pepper, manioc, peanuts, potatoes, beans, sugar cane, bananas, pineapples, kapok, raphia, jute-hemp, sisal, papyrus, milla panza, koma, etc.

The principal ores found in the colony are: copper, tin, iron, gold, manganese, raw silver, platinum, cobalt, uranium, coal, etc. Diamonds are also found there.

Among the animal products we will mention the following: ivory, beeswax, skins, leather, etc.

Many industrial enterprises are already established in the

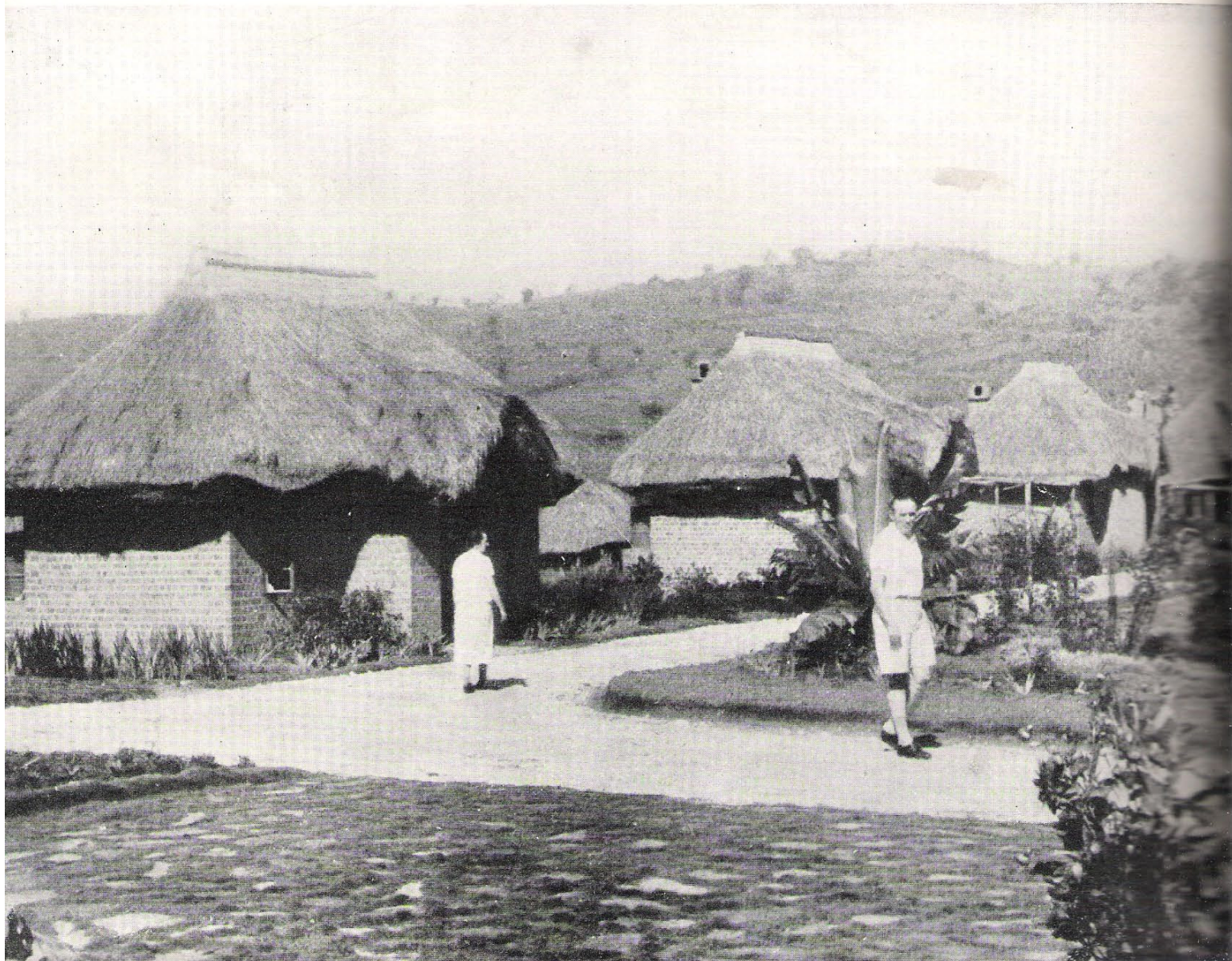
colony. They embrace the following activities: foundries, engineering shops, yards for machine building, engineering shops for engine repairs and for motor car repairs, cement works, brickyards and potteries, quarries and limekilns, saw mills, wood-coke plants, joineries, furniture factories, buildings yards, hydro and thermo electric works, printing houses, spinning and weaving mills, cotton shelling plants, rice factories, salt works, soap factories, oil works, aerated water factories, breweries, flour mills, sugar mills, oxhydric gas works, ice factories, coffee factories, cocoa factories, rubber dressing plants, laundries, bakeries, cannell and tobacco factories, plants for the manufacture of explosives. drums, etc.

It was only in 1910 that the Belgian Congo began to be developed commercially. About a thousand industrial and commercial enterprises were already operating.

In 1920, 2,650 concerns were registered there, among which were 14 transport companies, 19 agricultural societies, 13 mining companies. Today, this number has grown to 7,000 commercial, industrial and agricultural enterprises, half of which are Belgian firms.

The total Belgian investment in the Congo amounts to over three hundred million dollars.

*A hotel at Butembo. Each guest has a little house of his own.*







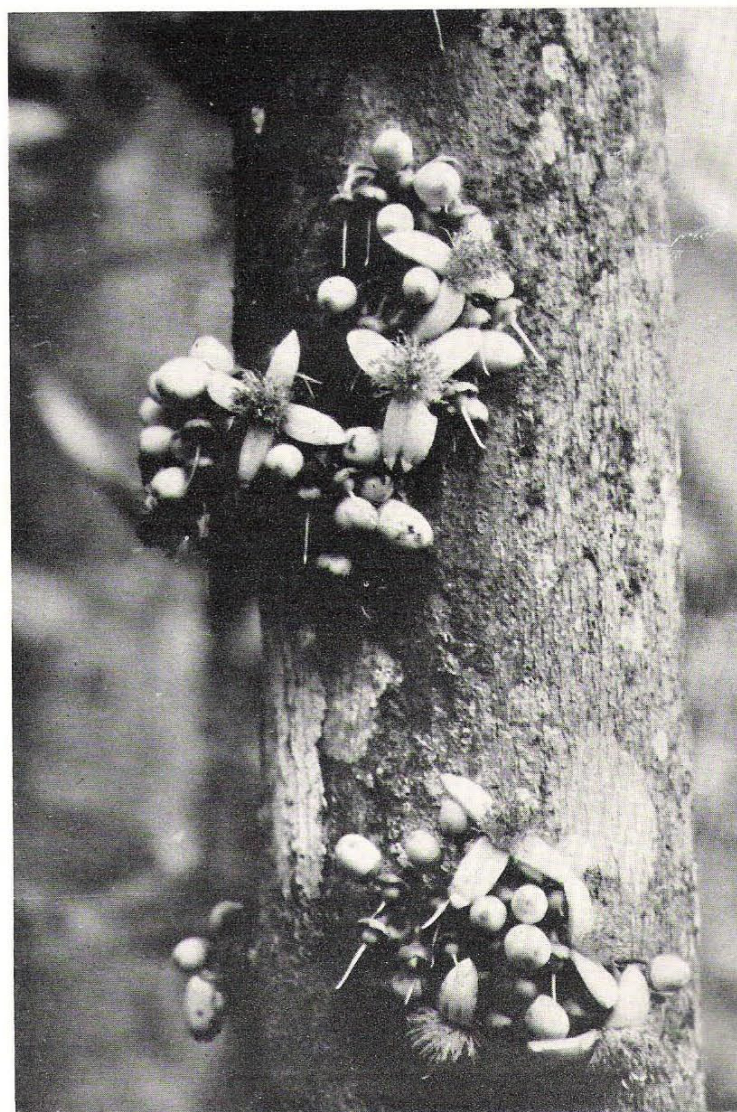
*A familiar and charming scene in the Congo jungle.*

## A Country of Peace and Grandeur

It is scarcely sixty years since the Congo was still a huge unknown region in the center of Africa, a region into whose secrecy no one had yet been able to penetrate. In the west, the most audacious explorers had never advanced more than 175 miles from the Atlantic coast; in the east, Livingstone and Cameron had been brought to a standstill by a river which had never before been explored.

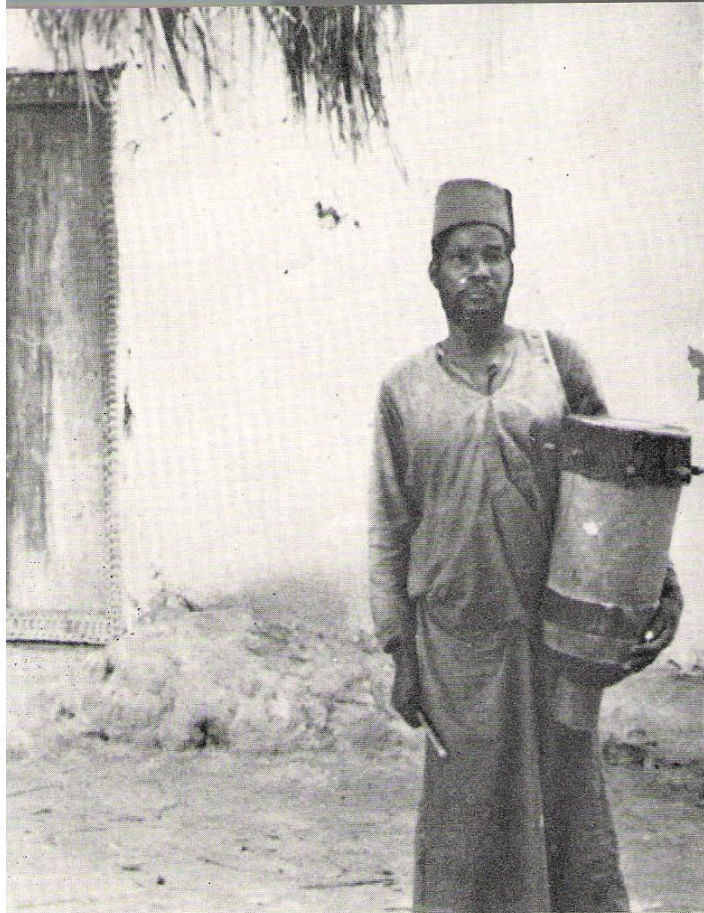
Between this river and the ocean spread the jungle, impenetrable forests and complete mystery. All that was known of this country into which no white man had ever ventured was that it was inhabited by a quantity of black tribes with a dreadful reputation for cannibalism. It was also known that the odious Arab slave traders went there to get supplies for the miserable caravans they took to the Zanzibar coast and shipped to the Levant.

Permanent peace and rule without cruelty now reign where among other more pacific peoples, savage tribes,



*Strange flowers in the Lukolela region.*





ive of the Arab type.

A pigmy and his son



thirsty for blood and hungry for human flesh once waged ceaseless and furious warfare on each other, and where hostility and distrust of the white man exposed the latter to the gravest danger. The open sore of slavery which cost Africa thousands, if not millions of lives, and against which Belgium had to put up a long fight, is now only a far-away memory, and has been for a long time. The black men of Central Africa can now lead a peaceful existence under the benevolent eye of Belgian authority.

Fifty years ago the population of the Congo was estimated at 30 millions, since then the population has fallen to 10 millions. Slavery, intestinal wars, and sleeping sickness had made terrible ravages among the native population before the Belgians were able to complete the organization of their colony. The mortality rate had reached appalling proportions and one wonders what would have been the fate of the black races of Central Africa without the intervention of Europeans. The pacific conquest of the country by Belgium thus had this first and fortunate result in stopping a decay which was threatening to become permanent.

It must be borne in mind, however that these estimates made fifty years ago as to the number of inhabitants in the Congo were largely approximate, and also that the present census only counts the natives who live a more or less sedentary life.

At any rate, the scourges which were destroying the black race have been energetically wiped out. The slave-trade, as mentioned above, gave rise to great bloodshed. It received its death-blow when the Belgian Dhanis inflicted a last defeat on the Arabs at the end of 1893, after a campaign lasting more than a year. With the opening-out of the country, it was possible to put an end to the incessant fighting which had been going on between the tribes. Sanitary measures and the creation of hospitals and infirmaries have stopped the spread of sleeping-sickness. In addition, the bettering of the natives' living conditions, and, in particular, their health, is the constant care of the Belgian authorities. It is more than likely that the population, after the present stagnation due to past causes, will slowly begin to show an increase.

But progress, the creation of industries and the exploitation of the Congo, have not altered the primitive face of Central Africa. The tribes have not lost their picturesque aspect and customs. African nature has kept her mysterious charm and grandeur in spite of towns and industrial centers. She still gives shelter to abundant fauna, and the gorilla, the lion, the famous okapi, not to speak of the elephant and hippopotamus, are magnets to attract the seeker of adventures.

Ruanda-Urundi is also to the east, a territory over which Belgium exerts a mandate, with a population principally consisting of the Watuzi tribe, as remarkable for their great stature and admirable proportions as they are for their intelligence and nobility of manners.

*The mighty Congo River, always an object of admiration and awe to the natives*

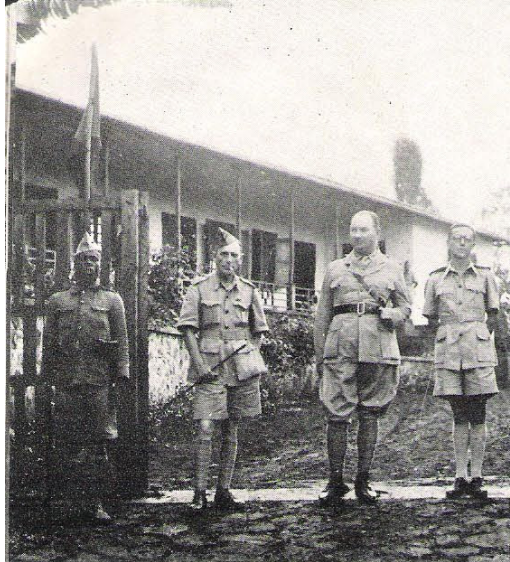






# In Ethiopia Nine Italian Generals Surrendered to the Belgian Congo Forces

(Based on George Weller's articles in the "Chicago Daily News.")



General Gilliaert and Colonel Dronckers-Martens at the Italian headquarters of the Saio after the conquest of that stronghold.

Belgium has crossed the entire continent of Africa to take its first revenge on the Axis. In a tropical campaign, in the course of which the Belgians had to surmount heavy tolls of dysentery and pulmonary diseases as well as numerous natural obstacles, and in face of an Italian army superior in numbers, firing power and strategic positions, the Belgian forces seized for the British some of the natural mountain fortresses of Ethiopia.

Thanks to the daring Belgian expedition, England no longer needs to worry about the White Nile's headwaters, the other source of Lower Egypt's indispensable annual supply of fertile topsoil and life-giving water. Congolese troops under the direction of Major-General Auguste Gilliaert, Belgium's solidly built, six-foot general, and commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Leopold Bronckers Martens, have delivered the watershed to Britain. An idea of the magnitude of the forces met by Belgium's hand-made army may be derived from the fact that General Gilliaert's two lieutenant-colonels and three majors, heading three battalions of colonial troops, received overtures of peace from nine Italian generals and 370 ranking officers. To these were added 15,000 Italian and native N. C. O.'s and men.

In every one of the bitter engagement culminating in the siege of Saio, the Belgians were outnumbered three and four to one. For periods of as long as two months, due to the impassable roads and ebb conditions on the tributaries of the White Nile, the Congolese troops were cut off from supplies. Their condition was continuously more precarious than that of their antagonists.

The risks of taking the Congolese defense force upon a trans-African expedition several times as long as any similar caravan ever had attempted, and and through virtually uninhabited country, were closely studied before hand.

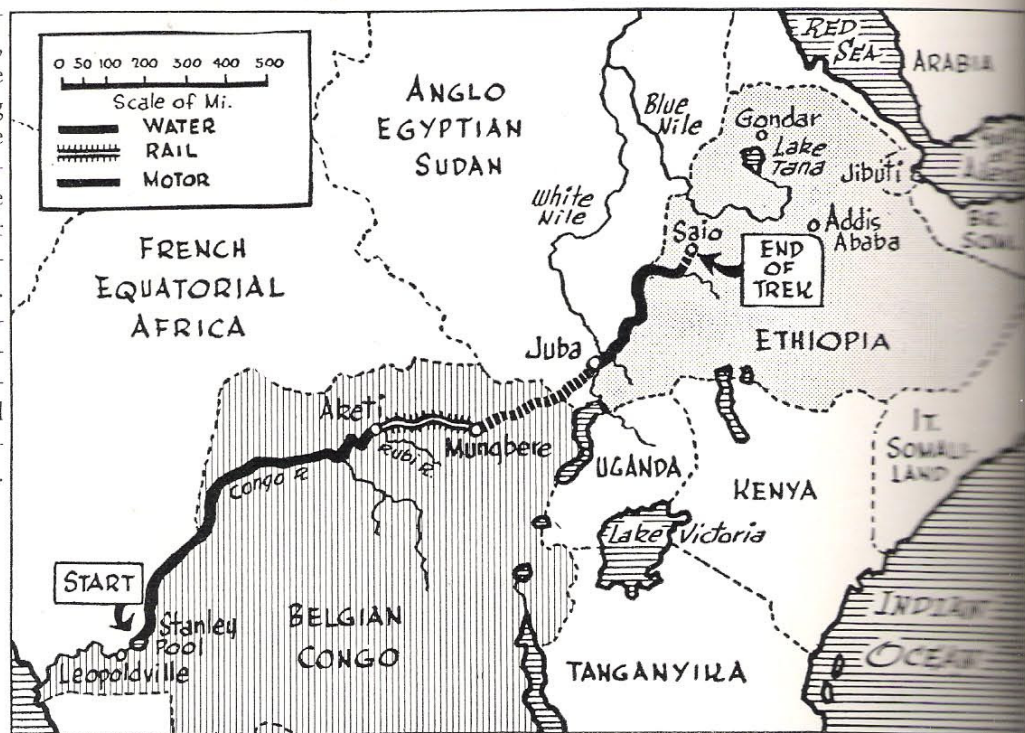
Governor-General Pierre Ryckmans and Lieutenant-General Paul Ermans, commander-in-chief, took part in the discussions with the South African and British military missions in Léopoldville.

Before reaching the Ethiopian rampart held by Italian troops, Belgian Congo had to hold together an armed column of trucks carrying soldiers, porters and munitions 1,400 miles across almost uninhabitable country. The first aim of the attack was Asosa in the region drained by the Blue Nile, about 300 miles north of the Italian headquarters at Saio.

Starting from Watsa, in northeastern Congo, the first battalion to depart climbed slowly out of the Congo watershed, whose crest is marked by the Congo-Sudanese frontier, and descended by way of Yei to Juba, head of navigation of the White Nile. En route, the troops pitched camp in the region where the aging Theodore Roosevelt came before the first World War for his last shooting expedition, where the scarce wild rhinoceros still hides and giraffes and elephants abound.

At Juba, with the burning bowl of the White Nile before them, the column turned northward along the White Nile, then still in the dry season. River boats, with the current favorable, brought them in five days to Malakal where dwell the strange, long-legged Shilluk people, a cattle-keeping tribe of extremely thin physique who wear tan, knee-length tunics. When the clothespole Shilluks

Map of the Ethiopian campaign.







*An Italian military airport in Ethiopia taken by the Belgian Congo forces.*

first saw the sons of Congo, with their sharpened teeth and tattoo-corrugated faces, it was difficult to say which were the more surprised.

### **The attack on Asosa**

At Melut the column turned eastward, pushing their American trucks through two days of blistering, waterless desert to Kurmuk. Major Isidore Herbiet, known to his battalion as Tata—meaning father—prepared for attack upon Asosa. The King's African Rifles, consisting of natives from East Africa, commanded by Colonel William Johnson, were already moving into line at Asosa and awaited Belgian help.

Asosa, also called Bari Cossa, is located in a depression surrounded by hills and possesses barracks, a radio station, a hospital and an airdrome. It required three days for the battalion, with sweating porters carrying machine guns upon their heads, to mount from Kurmuk, Sudanese border town, to positions outside Asosa, which is over 5,000 feet in altitude.

The combined attack of the Congolese troops and the King's African Rifles began on March 11, 1941, just six weeks after the Belgians left the Congo. The Italians were too completely taken by surprise to meet the combined thrust. They abandoned Asosa, pushing southward to join their next garrison along the Ethiopian massif at Ghidami, 120 miles distant.

Asosa finished with virtually no losses except by disease.

The Belgian battalion was given the hard task of doubling back across the Sudanese desert to the Nile port of Melut, a distance of about 225 miles, ascending the river to the point where it meets the Sobat at Malakal, then doubling back eastward again parallel to the Sobat and Baro Rivers, 275 miles to the Ethiopian foothills to close the open mouth of the trap laid for the Italians.

There was the growing danger in this period of the campaign, when the Italians were still strong and well organized, that the withdrawal into western Ethiopia, which in general was orderly, might abruptly turn into a dangerous attack upon British positions in the Sudan. At almost all points the Italians were better armed and more amply provisioned than any allied troops.

Had they been able to repeat the Belgian maneuver in the reverse direction and cross the burning Sudanese plain to the big airdrome beside the Nile at Malakal there was the prospect that the British might have to withdraw troops from the Libyan front, where the Germans were making themselves sharply felt, in order to hold the Sudanese rear positions.

The King's African Rifles who had elected to try to force the Italians southward from Asosa toward Ghidami, along 120 miles of ravines of Italian highland, were in the meantime halted by General Gazzera. It was unmistakable to the Belgians that the Italians were planning, if not to strike at the Sudan immediately, to summon all their energies for a bitter defense of Saio's natural fortress





*A Belgian military field radio station in Ethiopia.*

and agriculturally rich neighboring plateau, the gate of which is the city of Gambela.

Everything depended upon a single Belgian battalion moving fast and intact around three sides of a Sudanese desert square bounded on the east by the White Nile, on the west by Ethiopia and advancing still further eastward along the torrid road to Gambela in time to prevent the Italian General Pietro Gazzera, now alarmed by the fate of Asosa, from striking first along the same road into the Sudan.

The battalion, composed of 700 men and about 400 porters, made the 800 mile journey through country where the temperature ranged constantly above 100 degrees in 11 days. This meant 11 days of the severest hardship for men alternately buffeted brutally in trucks, then forced to descend to heave them from the sand.

### **Gambela stormed**

The Italians defended Gambela bitterly. They knew that if they lost the village they would be forced to retreat up into the mountain stronghold of Saio where General Pietro Gazzera, Mussolini's former war minister, had established his headquarters.

To storm Gambela, the Belgians, fatigued by their 800-mile, 11-day journey from Asosa, had to make a frontal attack on the village. The Italians had placed machine guns under sycamore trees along the river, making an attack by water impossible.

A second line of eight machine guns covered the road from the Sudanese desert as far as the "Sugarloaf", a 300-

foot, conical hill. The flanks of the peak were ringed by Italian machine guns.

The Belgians sent Congo infantrymen creeping through the brush, led by a white officer. They silenced the machine guns on the river and then prepared to handle Sugarloaf.

The Congolese asked to charge the sides of Sugarloaf with bayonets. They wiped out the machine-gun nests.

The Belgians lost three infantrymen killed and 15 Congolese wounded. The Belgian losses increased the next day, when two Caproni bombers destroyed several buildings.

The Italians refused to tell their casualties, but numerous Italian bodies were found unburied in the streets of Gambela.

After the Belgian battalion took Gambela, the Italians retreated by mountain road to Saio, in orderly retirement, well defended.

Exhausted and suffering almost to a man from dysentery, the Belgian battalion settled down to hold Gambela against the Italians behind them. The Belgians were alone between the hostile Ethiopian rampart and the Sudanese plain, without either artillery or aircraft.

### **The battles of the Bortai**

However, the African radio brought the news that another battalion was en route across the Sudanese plains and a third battalion was assembling at Faradje, in northeastern Congo, preparing to dare the same journey across Africa.

Soon, the Belgian Congo forces started up the 40-mile road toward Saio, 4,000 feet above them. On the plateau a torrent called the Brotai, crossing the road at a right angle, was the first natural defense of the Italians.

In the first battle of the Bortai, April 15, the Belgians lost two valuable officers. Lieut. Simonet, scouting alone between the lines, stumbled into an Italian ambush and was killed. Sergt. Dorgeo, a former Foreign Legionnaire, who had arrived in the Congo after escaping from Narvik, was unfamiliar with his surroundings. He was surprised by three Italian officers who emerged from the brush holding up their hands and shouting "We are English." Not sure that the King's African Rifles, supposedly at Ghidami, 50 miles to the north, might not have sent a liaison party to the Bortai, the Belgian officer lowered his revolver. He was mowed down by Italian snipers in the bush. In the ensuing fight the Belgians lost a native corporal and four soldiers. But three Italians and 40 Eritreans were killed and 70 wounded.

During the first struggles at the Bortai, the Belgians learned to respect the Italian spotting system. The Italians posted an observer in a tree with a sniper. A squad of infantrymen hid around the tree as a guard.

But the artillery barrages following the Italian observations were often wastefully long. Usually the Italians continued pounding with 77's more than an hour after the Belgian patrols had stolen back to their own lines.

The Italians took full advantage of their superior positions and armament nine days later. After a two-hour bar-



rage they attacked. It was the first time the men from the Congo had heard the terrible concert of modern gun fire in full chorus.

Using machine guns, automatic rifles, baby machine guns and hand grenades, squads of Eritreans with Galla snipers filtered through the Belgian left and right.

One of the heroes of the unequal struggle was a Congolese porter who rushed unarmed into the gunfire to aid two radio operators. He rescued their apparatus intact. Belgian officers often were saved by their men.

The Belgians were forced to withdraw beyond a pair of hills that screened them from view. Lieut.-Colonel Van der Meersch's battalion bore the brunt of this battle.

### Rations dwindle

Following the two battles of the Bortai, the Belgian situation in the rear became critical because of weather conditions and a break in the slender line of trans-Sudanese communications.

While the Italian troops ate plentifully on their highland gardens the Belgians between Bortai brook and Gambela were on half rations. The heat mounted to 110 degrees in the shade. Clouds of mosquitoes rose from the plain.

The Gambela airdrome, whose single hangar still bears the ironical words, "Roma Doma"—"Rome is master"—was

too small for food-carrying planes. Small amounts could be dropped from the skies, but it was impossible to feed 2,500 men in this way.

Lieut.-Colonel Leopold Dronkers Martens, a small man known for his exceptional ability to absorb tropical heat, was hard-tested to hold the situation together.

The Belgian hospital motorcade and a company of engineers were trapped by rains in the swamps between Gambela and the White Nile port of Malakal. They remained there nearly two months, and were fed exclusively by planes.

Several porters obliged to carry food to the front lines, 40 miles away on a cold rainy plateau, died from undernourishment and fatigue. The officers, living on canned beef and rice, were also affected.

The food supply fell so low that the officers took the camouflage nets covering the trucks and seined the river for fish.

The month of May, when no fighting took place, was the most difficult and tragic for the Belgian Force Publique. Beriberi broke out.

In the first days of June, however, reinforcements and food came from the Congo via the White Nile and it was decided to try and cut off Saio from the city of Mogi which

*The Saio heights where severe fighting took place between the Congo forces and the Italians.*





commanded the supply line of General Gazzera's army of 8,000 men.

### Mozi is surrounded

The Belgians had only 2,000 men and in order to hold the Bortai front, they could only spare 250 men for the attack on Mozi. It was necessary for these men to descend again from the plateau and to launch an attack from Gambela.

From Gambela it was a two-day climb upon all fours by mountain goat path to the Mogi positions. It required another day for each porter to descend. The maximum burden the most courageous black bearers from the Congolese jungle could carry upon their heads under such conditions was 35 pounds each. Nine of this was food eaten by themselves en route.

The bearer's legs were cut by the razor-sharp elephant grass, their bodies weakened by dysentery and malnutrition. Porters with strange Congolese names like Katanobo, Bungamuizi, Kabome and Sawila were cited in orders of the day for bravery and endurance.

The Belgians under the command of Captain Pierre Bounameau, attacked on June 9 but the Italian garrison held their well fortified position stoutly. Perceiving that Mogi could be taken only at heavy cost the Belgians dug

in around the town and sent patrols to ambush the road to Saio along which Italian food was being carried.

Lieut.-Colonel Leopold Dronkers Martens gave orders that the Belgians should increase their patrol activities upon the Saio plateau to make the Italians believe that they were facing superior forces.

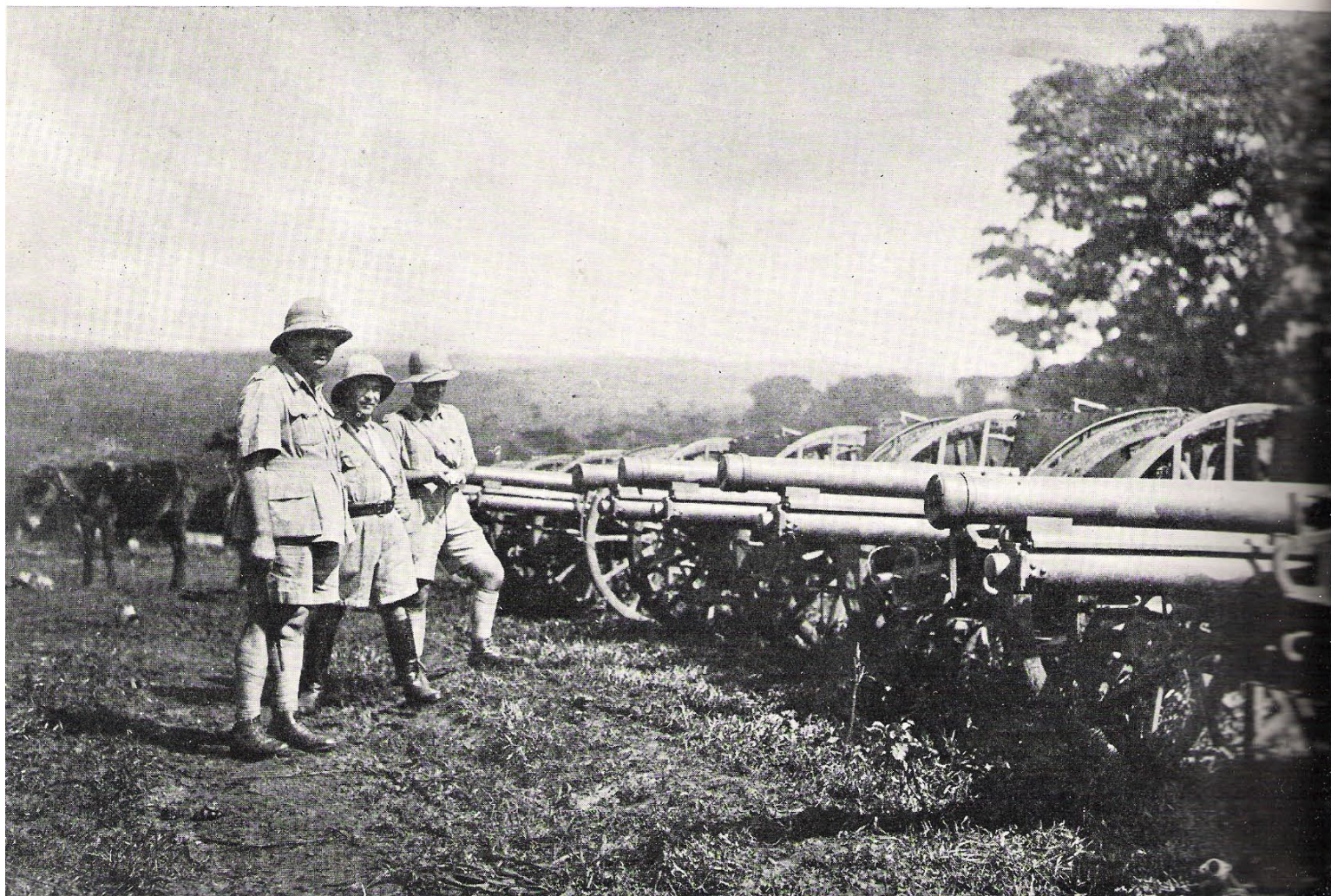
The Belgians used a ruse familiar to American pioneers in fighting the Indians. Frequently they moved their cannon and machine guns even before the Italian artillery found their range in order to give the impression of multiple points of fire. Meantime the alarmed General Gazzera tripled the Mogi garrison.

As the Belgians grew bolder the Italians grew more discreet. The South African Air Force began to send daily patrols of three Fairey-Hartebeest biplanes which bombed Saio and machine gunned the roads.

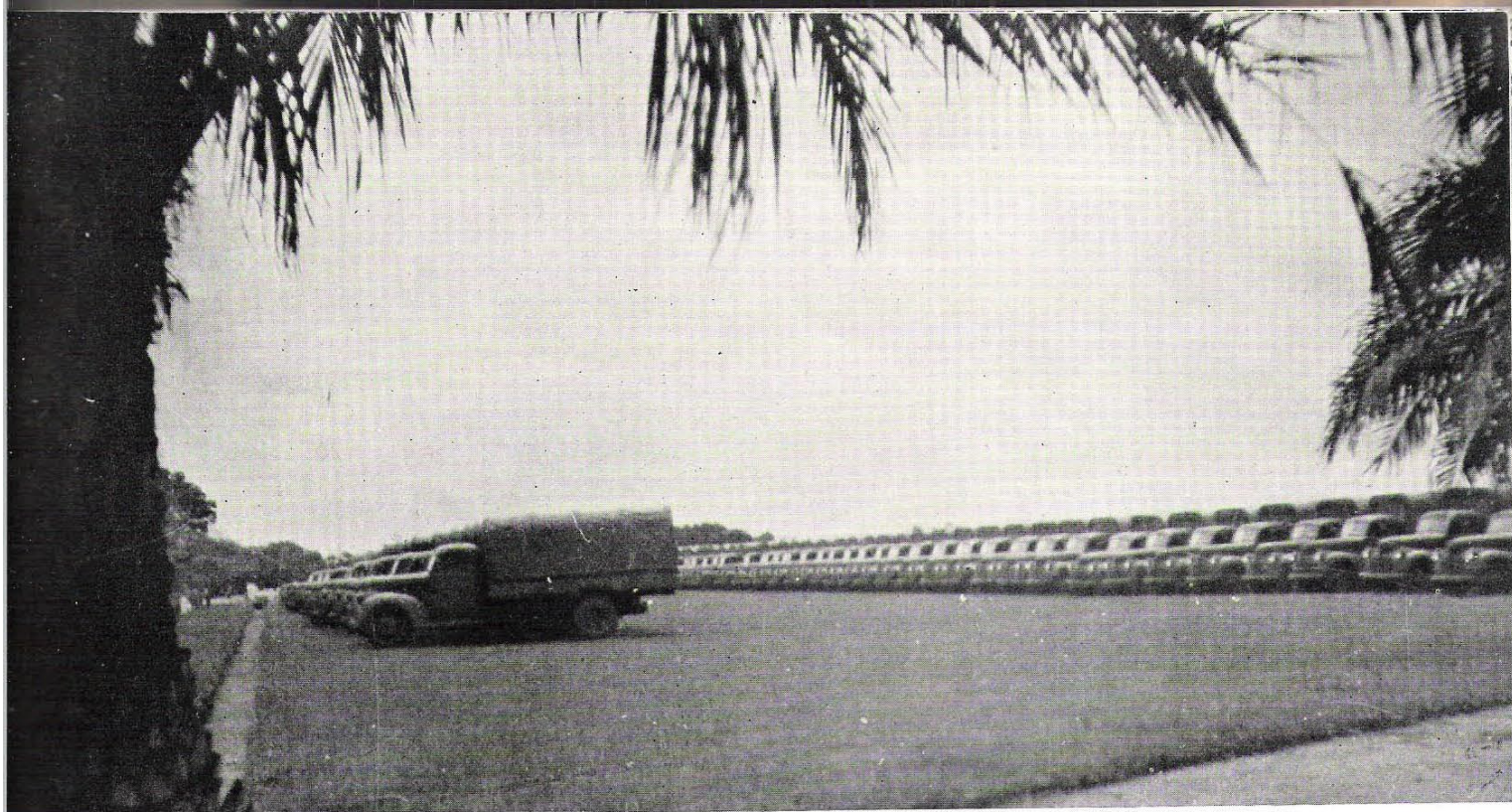
Then Major-General Auguste Gilliaert arrived from the Congo. It was decided that the plan for taking Mogi should be dropped and the meager forces entirely concentrated upon General Gazzera's headquarters at Saio.

The 3,500 Italian troops occupying Saio Heights alone outnumbered the total Belgian forces. The Fascists also had the 45th, 181st, 187th and 188th battalions of Eritreans whose battle pennons were covered with honors conferred by Mussolini. Moreover, the Italian officers and

*Some of the booty taken by the Congo forces after the Saio victory.*







*Belgian Congo trucks used for the transport of the forces which smashed the Italians.*

men retreating from Addis Ababa and Jimmi under British pressure were coming daily into Saio.

### **The surrender of Saio**

On July 1, the British radioed the Belgians that they had cut the 450-mile long Saio-Addis Ababa road at the Midessa River, 25 miles west from Lechenti and about 200 miles from Haile Selassie's capital. Then General Gilliaert prepared to close the mouth of the Belgian bag into which the Italians were streaming, but the offensive was a dangerous gamble because the Italians were better armed and fed, held superior positions with more fire power, and outnumbered the three Belgian battalions three and four to one.

At dawn, on July 3 the Belgian advanced posts opened fire and half an hour later all the batteries of artillery entered into action. The Italians replied with the full intensity of their superior cannonading power.

The battalion under Major Duperoux went forward with orders to take the two dumpling hills flanking each side of the road. The Italians had gained the hills in the second battle of the Bortai in April. Duperoux's men crept through the brush and high grass for the dumplings which were heavily infested with machine-guns.

The battalion in reserve, commanded by Major Boniface Robyn, crawled forward behind Duperoux's left. Simultaneously General Gilliaert sent the third battalion under Licut-Colonel Edmond Van der Meersch upon assignment that was the key to the entire operation: a long, swinging movement around the right, through grass higher than a

man and along a goat path that had been carefully plotted by scouting parties over a fortnight.

The entire surprise operation was successful. The Italians, after falling back from the two dumplings found themselves flanked upon their left by Colonel Van der Meersch's forces and unable to hold the ravine of the Bortai between the dumpling and the Italian secondary line of fortifications strung across the top of Saio Mountain. They melted away down hill toward the Sudanese plain upon their right. They dared not use the road for direct retreat for it was under continuous Belgian artillery fire.

At 1:40 p.m., the encircling battalion was preparing an assault upon the Italian heights. But, at that very moment, two motorcars bearing white flags were seen descending the serpentine road toward the Belgian positions. In the cars were General Gazzera's chief of staff and other high officers bringing an offer of surrender. General Gilliaert met them in front of the Belgian side of the Bortai.

Vastly outnumbered by the Italians, even after surrender, the Belgians were hard put to handle 15,000 prisoners in the whole province of Galla Sidamo. At Saio alone nine generals, 370 lesser officers, 2,575 Italians and 3,500 native soldiers surrendered to the Congolese force which, with 2,000 porters, totaled hardly 5,000 men.

Belgian deaths were 462 men, both white and black, four-fifths of them dying of disease. The Italians probably lost about three times as many, although casualty figures are not available.





*One of the Congo hospitals for Europeans.*

## The Fight against Epidemics

The official health service of the Belgian Congo includes both clinics and prophylactic centers organized by the colonial government and completely covered in its budget.

Besides the government medical service, a number of private clinics also give medical services. Among these medical services, some are independent, others are subsidized by the government.

The medical personnel of the Official Health Service is part European and part native.

The active European personnel consists of nine medical directors, six laboratory technicians, six hygienists, 125 visiting physicians, three pharmacists, 145 sanitary inspectors and lay nurses and 127 nun nurses.

The native auxiliary personnel comprises 312 units: graduate nurses (from government schools), practical nurses, sanitary inspectors and midwives.

The stations include analysis and research laboratories, dispensaries for the treatment of movable invalids, and separate hospitals for white and black in every important center. There are certain specialized hospital units for natives such as the isolation hospitals for sleeping sickness, tuber-

culosis and leprosy. Pharmaceutical laboratories and hygiene offices in the towns and ports, as well as stores and warehouses, complete the medical set-up.

Besides these facilities, the itinerant missions, which are in fact medical camps, should be mentioned. Their job is to travel throughout the part of the country assigned to them and methodically to fight the epidemics and endemics which sweep through the native population. Their center of activity is the little dispensary maintained by the tribal chief.

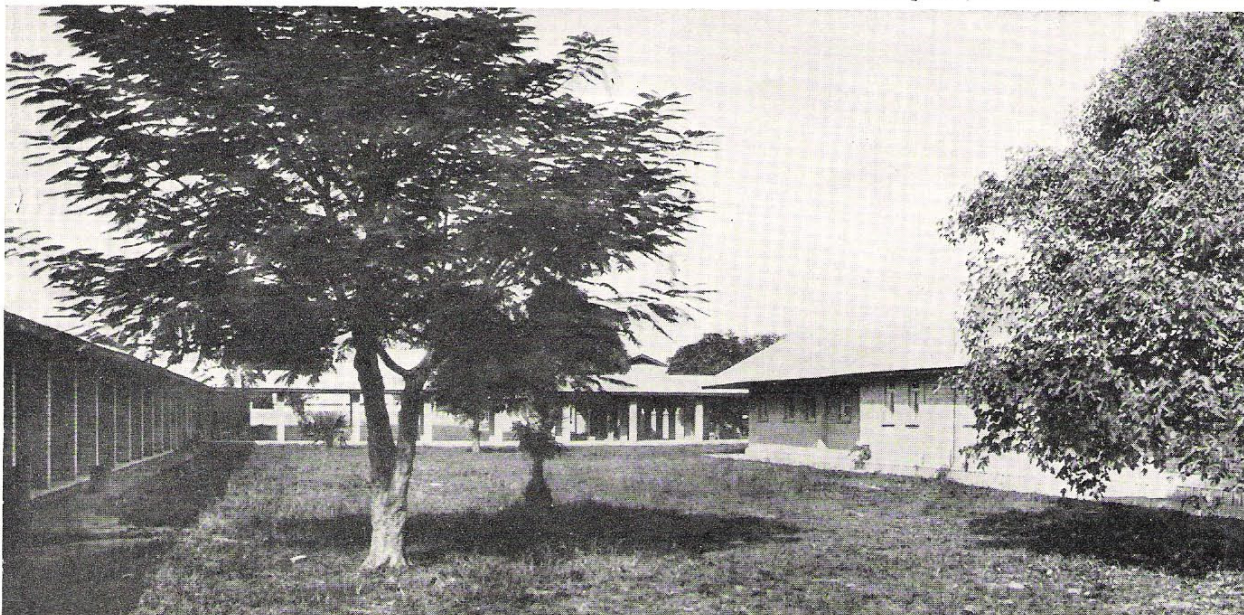
Native brigades, also under the direction of a medical doctor, do the work necessary to safeguard public health in the big cities and ports.

On the average, 17,000 white and about 1,000,000 colored people are treated annually. Private organizations treat an average of 1,100,000 colored people.

Moreover, government doctors and private organizations examine 5,034,442 natives for sleeping sickness. The official medical services spend about two million dollars a year.

Besides the Colonial Health Service mention should be

*Hospital for natives at Leopoldville.*





made of the numerous lay and religious medical aid organizations and the services set up by the large commercial firms. The total of these services is equal in importance to three fifths of the official medical service.

The health services of the big companies which include 80 doctors, 20 pharmacists and 50 health inspectors, have been specifically set up for their employees. Progress which has been made, particularly in the Katanga province, is all to the honor of these companies. But their activity does not stop here. They also treat the native population which lives within the range of their activity as well as combatting to a certain extent the endemics and epidemics.

First aid work is widespread and varied.

Free native medical aid, which is rendered by the national and foreign missions, is in operation throughout the Congo. These organizations, subsidized by the government and operating on a regular basis, include a minimum of 80 Catholic and 35 Protestant mission posts. A number of centers supervised by medical missionaries, both national and foreign, should also be added to the list.

The Congo Medical Foundation of Louvain, with a large staff of five doctors, is operating in several districts.

The Congo Red Cross, with several doctors, is expanding its activity daily in the province of Stanleyville. Rural dispensaries in the provinces of Stanleyville and Costermansville are steadily increasing their areas of activity.

The protection against infant mortality, which is sub-

dized by the government, and which offers consultations on pre-natal care and infant feeding, is being put to more and more use by the native population.

At the 1926 Colonial Congress, King Albert particularly emphasized the responsibility which the colonial government assumed with respect to the health of the native population. As a result of his speech, the Parliament voted a national donation of two million dollars to which sum the Department of Colonies added three million dollars, thus creating a special fund for native medical care.

The Foréami—as the foundation was called—program for the first five years includes complete medical care in the rural areas of determined regions for all existing epidemics or endemics. This consists of a census and examination of the entire population, diagnosis of every disease, and particularly trypanosis, yaws, leprosy, syphilis, tuberculosis, dysentery, and their treatment until cured. The Foundation undertakes also to fight against prenatal death and infant mortality and to put into effect every measure designed to improve the hygienic conditions in villages which affect the health of the natives.

Foréami has strikingly reduced sleeping sickness and yaws, developed numerous social services, increased the health of the villages and created a favorable demographic situation, births exceeding deaths by 20 to 1000. Foréami treats a yearly average of 265,000 colored people and examines another million.

*A patch of savanna in central Congo*







*School for native boys at Kisantu.*

# Catholic Missions

Missionary work in the Belgian Congo dates back only to fifty years. The success achieved is all the more praiseworthy, for in that half century the number of Catholic natives grew from year to year until they numbered, in 1939, 2,127,986.

In 1886, an "African Seminary" was founded in Louvain to recruit missionaries for the Congo, but in 1862, a seminary had been founded at Scheut, near Brussels, with that object.

The first missionaries to go to the Belgian Congo were the White Fathers, arriving there in 1888. They were quickly followed by the Scheut Fathers and by the Jesuits. Their task was not an easy one, for they had to undergo cruel hardships; in 1920, for instance, a large number of missionaries died of sleeping sickness.

The principal reason for their success is not only their spirit of self-sacrifice but their understanding of the vital problems of civilization. That is why they tackled the education and the medical problems at the same time as the religious one. The result is that, although the white Cath-

*The Jesuits' mission at Kisantu.*







On the Congo river, the Tshumbiri mission's canoe comes out for the mail.

olic missionaries in the Belgian Congo number only 1,731, belonging to 21 congregations, there are 18,068 Catholic Schools, 516 Catholic hospitals, 120 leproseries and 128 maternity clinics.

Nearly every religious congregation in Belgium is represented in the Belgian Congo and they give their whole-hearted support to the colonial evangelization. The Belgian Government and the Congo authorities are fully cognizant of the importance of the missionaries' work and give them full help.

In the last few years, the Jesuits have also organized schools for the white children, and the war has not stopped progress in that direction: the College of Costermansville, built since the war started, has recently been opened.

A few figures will illustrate better than words the enormous task accomplished by the Catholic missionaries.

There are altogether 359 missions, 624 churches and 17,183 chapels together with 19 printing shops operated by the missions and which publish 25 periodicals.

Besides the 1,731 missionaries, there are 1,456 white sisters. There are also 81 native priests and 189 novices plus 1,480 seminarists. Moreover, 175 native sisters and 68 novices prove their devotion daily.

The Catholic hospitals and clinics give, yearly, 11 million consultations and the leproseries tend to 11,100 patients.

The wood engraving on the two following pages is by the English artist J. Buckland Wright.

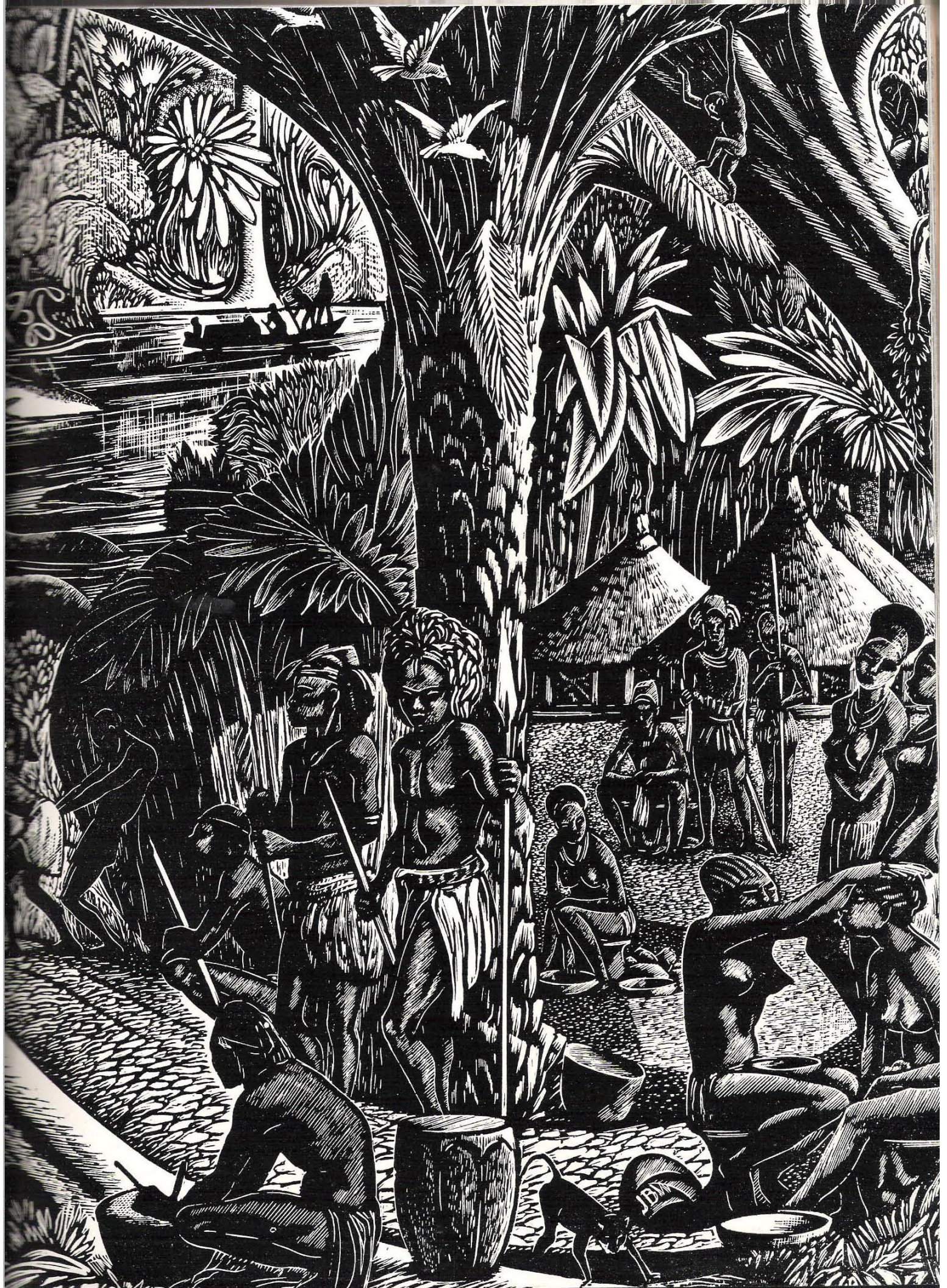
Medical inspection of natives at Kangu.







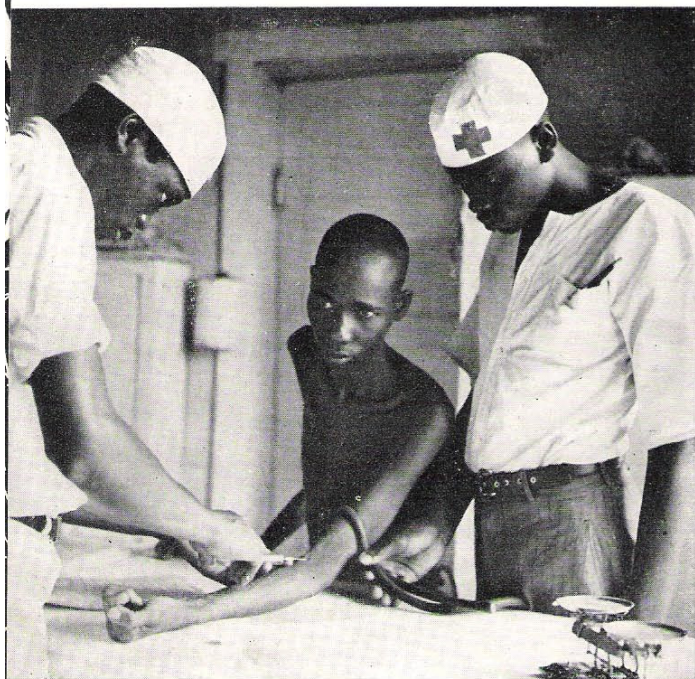






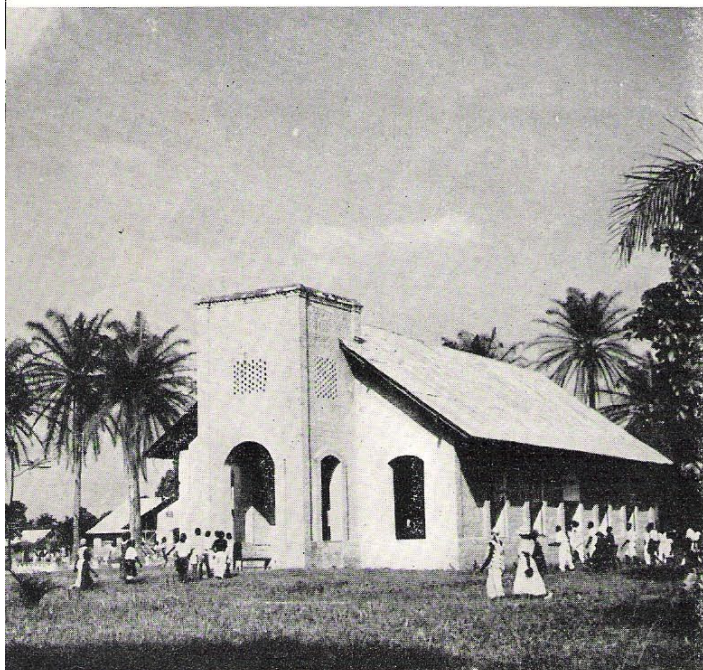


*Natives are being taught to handle scientific instruments.*



*Natives are able medical assistants.*

*Church at Bolenge.*



# Protestant Missions

Protestant missions, most of which are American, have also contributed in no small manner to the Congo natives' spiritual and physical welfare.

The first Protestant missionary was Dr. David Livingstone, who went to the Congo in 1854. Thereafter it took several years before an English mission headed by George Grenfell left for the colony.

Today, besides American and English Protestant missions, there are Scandinavian and Belgian Protestant missions all of which meet every three years at a general conference.

Although much attention is given by the Protestant missions to education and the teaching of trades—some twenty printing shops are maintained and books are published in forty dialects—the medical services form the most important part of their activity.

To some of the natives they give a scientific education and these natives are thus trained to become able assistants mainly in the medical field.

Thanks mainly to American generosity and a substantial subsidy of the Belgian Government, Protestant missions maintain an extensive medical service in the Belgian Congo which accounted for no less than 2,574,022 consultations in 1940, and 446,471 natives treated. These figures show a notable increase over the previous years.

There are 57 medical men employed by the Protestant missions in the Belgian Congo, as well as 98 white nurses and 8 missionaries dealing with medical services only. The Protestant native personnel comprises 381 male and female nurses.

The Protestant missions have 71 hospitals and dispensaries, 41 rural dispensaries, and 27 lazarets.

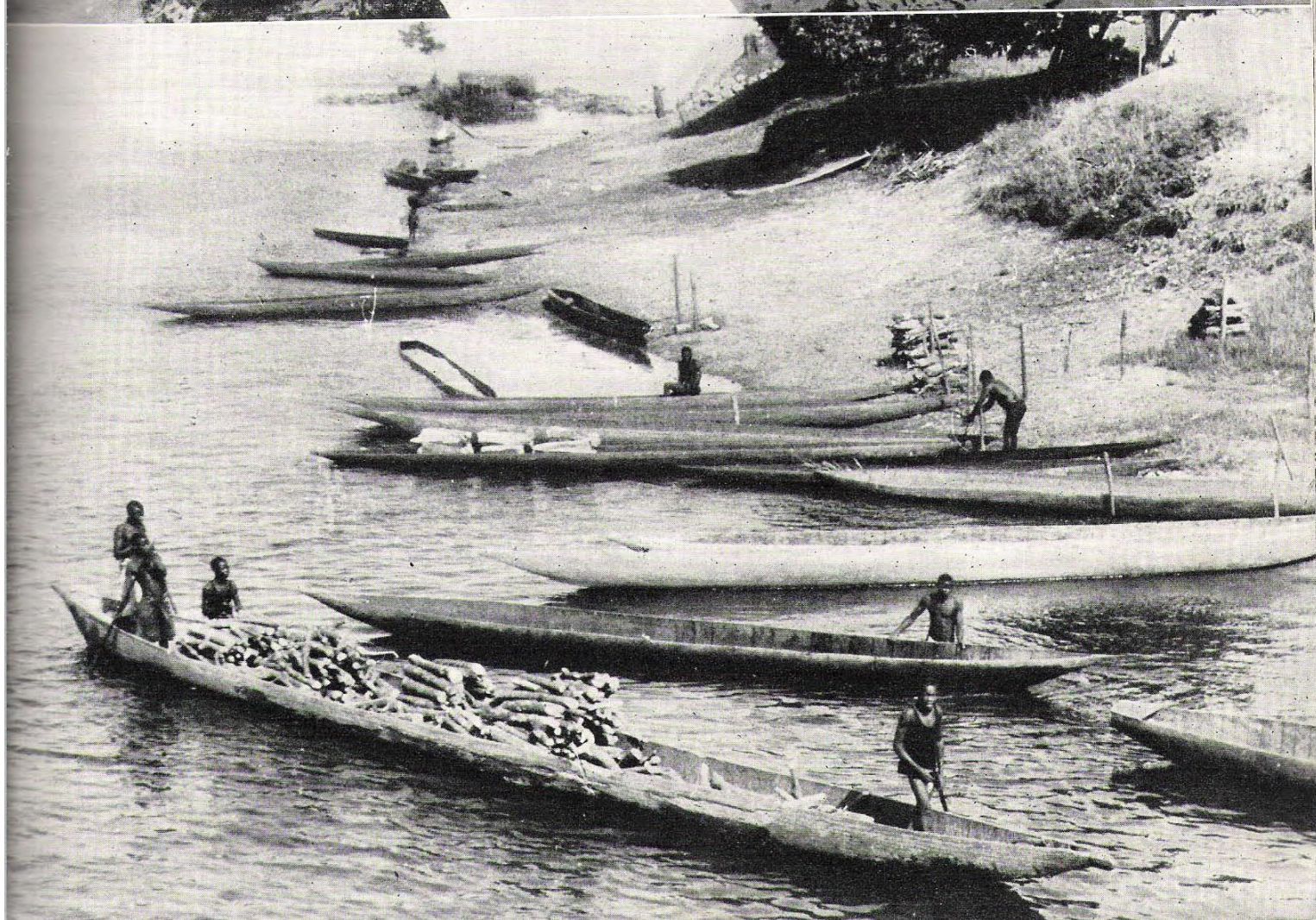
The Protestant missionaries are very devoted to their task and have gained the respect and affection of the natives.

An interesting periodical, "Congo Mission News," is published by the Congo Protestant Council.

*Embarking on a long journey*

*Natives shipping kindling wood  
on the Congo river.*



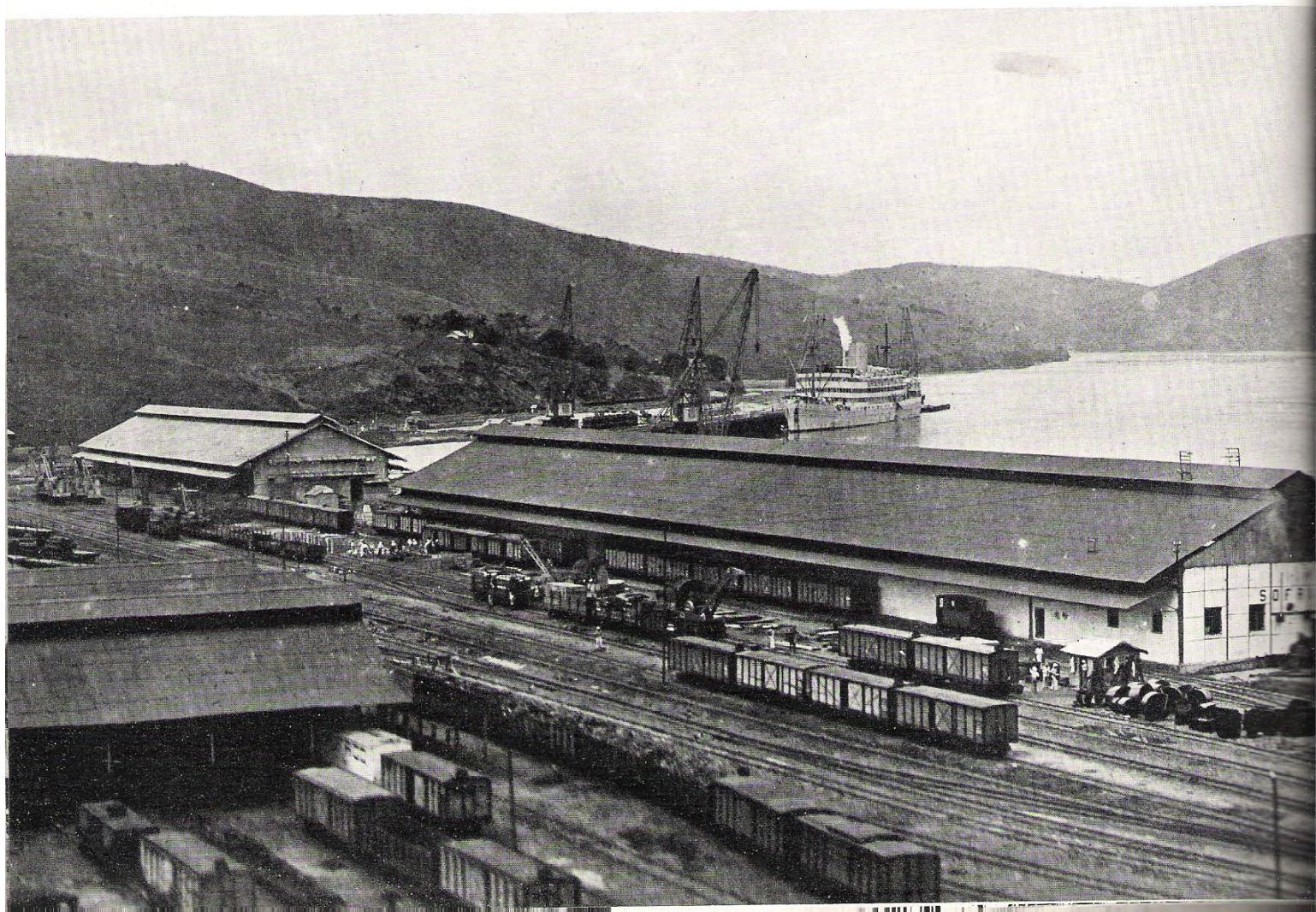






*native canoe meets the Clipper at Leopoldville. ↑*

*↓ The port of Matadi.*

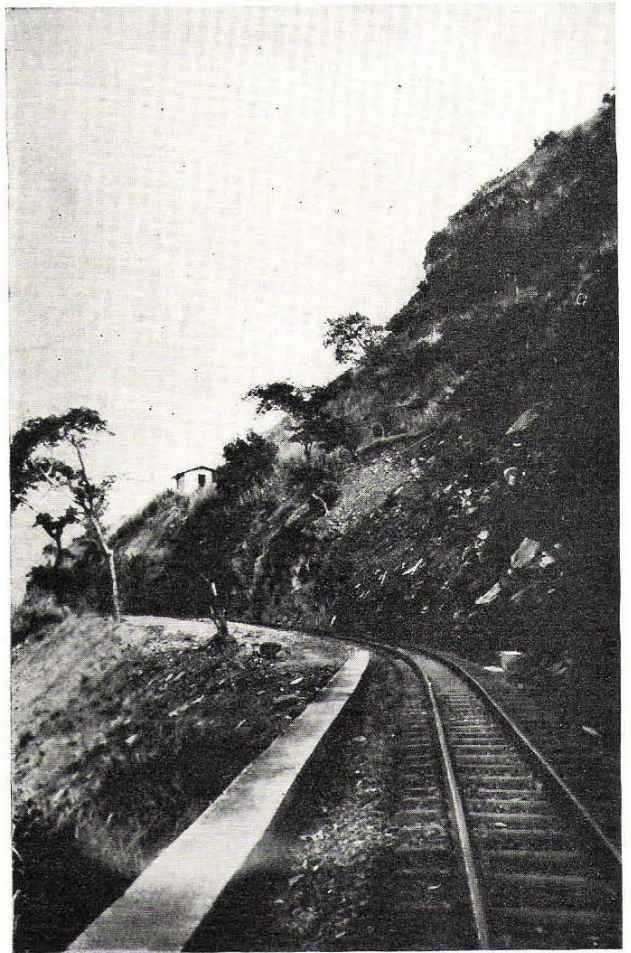




# A Modern System of Communications built up in Twenty Years

Although strenuous efforts were made by the Belgians in the Congo, before World War I, to open up the colony by building roads and railways and modernizing river navigation, the biggest stride in that direction was made in the last 20 years and it can be said that in those years the Belgian Congo has built a large and modern system of communications.

Over 3,500 miles of railroads are in operation. River navigation now extends to over 21,000 miles and river boats total over 110,000 tons. A network of 45,000 miles of highways completes these communications and some 10,000 cars



*Many obstacles were overcome to build the railway*

*Belgian engineers turned trails into highways.*







*Finely shaped canoes built by the natives can be seen on every river.*

and trucks as well as 2,000 motor cycles circulate daily on the roads.

The Congo is one of the few African colonies which has

*A small railroad station.*



a complete air mail system and the interior airlines now cover 10,000 miles.

Before the German aggression against Belgium, there was a regular airline between Belgium and the Congo, the distance of 4,000 miles being covered in three days. There are also numerous direct air links between the Belgian Congo and the other African countries. At the end of 1941, a Clipper service between the United States and the Congo was inaugurated. The 42-ton air boat takes five days to fly the 8,690 miles — the world's longest. The line connects with other airlines, namely to the Sudan and to South Africa.

By sea, the connections with Belgium were taken care of, before the war, by a Belgian company whose freighter and passenger ships were among the most modern in existence.

The Belgian Congo was the first African country to install a wireless system and today there is no city of importance in the Congo which has not its wireless installation. There is, of course, a good telegraph and telephone system.



# Congo Copper an Invaluable Help to the War Effort



*A miner at work in the Katanga district*

In 1900 the Congo Free State and the Katanga Company, wishing to realize some value from newly-discovered territories, founded an organization called the Comité Spécial du Katanga. Each paid in capital according to the value of his property both above and below the Katanga soil.

In 1901 the Special Committee transferred prospecting rights for the Katanga mines to an English company, Tanganyika Concessions Ltd. Five years later, on October 30, 1906, a company was formed by the Special Committee, Tanganyika Concessions Ltd., and the Société Generale de Belgique whose job was to assess the value of newly discovered mines. This company was called the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga. It was capitalized at 10 million francs. The investment has steadily increased until today it amounts to 176,400,000 francs (about six million dollars).

An agreement entered into between the Special Committee and the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga conceded the rights of exploitation to the latter company, including

among other things all copper deposits in a zone measuring about 15,000 square kilometers, located in the Haut-Katanga.

Due to the geological and topographical conditions which are often present with copper deposits, this metal lends itself particularly well to surface mining and to the use of less powerful methods of excavation such as the steam or electric shovel.

The first metallurgical operations on an industrial scale date from 1911 after the railroad was built through to the mines. In the beginning of this same year the first smelter was built and the first twelve months saw production of a thousand tons of copper. Today production is more than 150,000 tons and the known reserves are considerable.

The company has built railroad junctions, roads and houses for its European (2,000 white office workers) and native (18,000 workers) personnel, clubs, restaurants, movie theaters, water and electric power works, a glass factory, etc.

The health of the European and native population is supervised by the company's Medical Service which today has a staff of 28 doctors. Hospitals and sanatoriums have been set up at each

Thanks to the Congo, Belgium ranks among the largest copper producers in the world.

Copper is the most valuable of the so-called non-precious metals and constitutes today the principal source of Belgian colonial wealth. The Congo copper production is an invaluable help to the Allied war effort.

*Sheets of copper as are supplied to the United Nations.*





## Half-Million Ounces of Gold extracted yearly from Congo Mines

Prospecting undertaken by the Congo Free State in 1903 brought about the discovery of alluvial gold in the tributaries of the Ituri near Irumu. In 1904 the State decided to exploit the gold fields and the first machinery was set up in July 1905.

Prospecting pushed beyond the limits of the Kilo region, and in 1910, the Hannam Missions discovered in the Uélé-Nékopo a series of important veins in the tributaries of the Moto. A new rush was created under the name of "Moto" and the first "clean-up" made at the end of 1911.

Toward the end of 1919, the government put the working of these gold mines into the hands of a committee composed of colonial technicians which was to administer it under the name of "Régie Industrielle des Mines de Kilo-Moto."

The white employees in the mines number about 300 Europeans, the number of colored people employed in various capacities is about 20,000. Production is over 512,000 ounces per year, including that of privately owned mines.

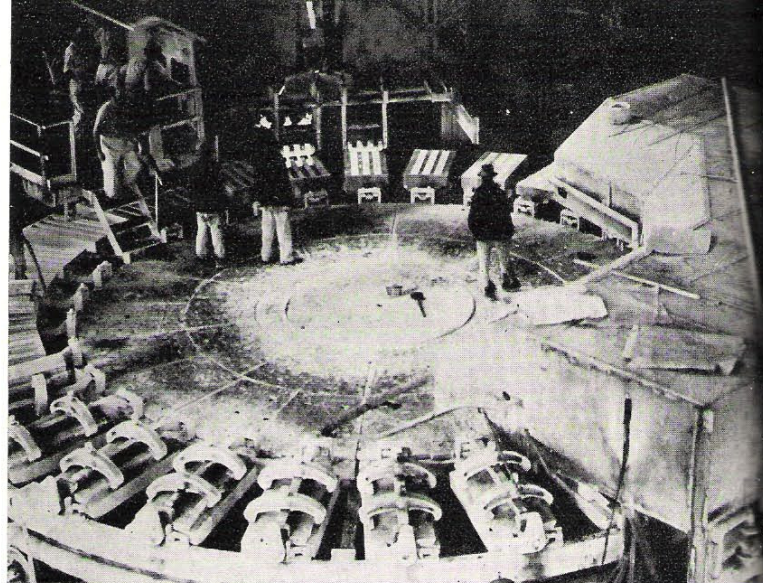
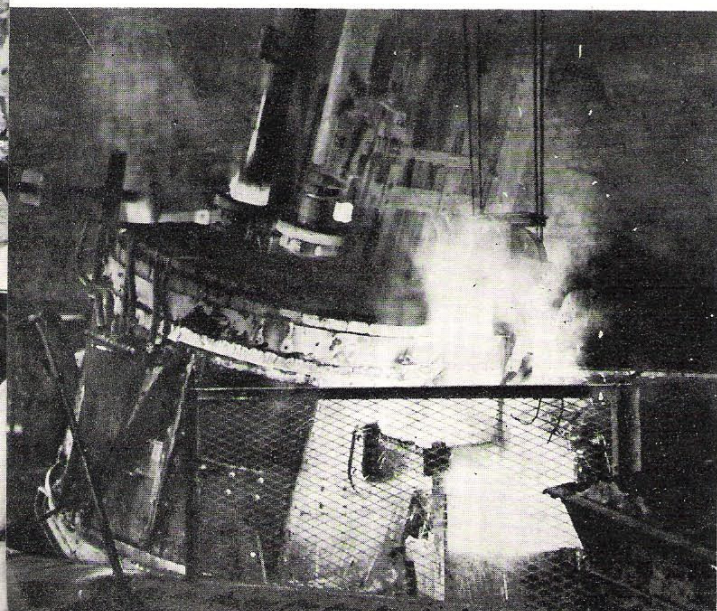
## Largest World Production of Radium

Uranium, the ore from which radium is extracted, was not discovered in the Congo until 1913; but the Belgian Congo now produces 90% of the world supply.

Before the war, the ore was treated in Belgium. Its richness is such that, in 1928, over 35 grams of radium were produced from the Belgian Congo source, as against 3 grams for the rest of the world, and the price of radium was accordingly considerably reduced.

Much of the Congo radium is given away for scientific and medical purposes.

*Heroult furnace at a Jadotville Panda factory.*



*Interior of a factory at Jadotville Shituru.*

## Congo Strategic Metals

The estimated tin deposits in the Congo form an immense line from the Southwest to the Northeast, from the 11th parallel south to the 1st parallel south.

Out of a yearly world production of, in round figures, 200,000 tons of tin, the Congo was responsible before the war for approximately 10,000 tons. This Belgian production is increasing rapidly and is more than ever precious to the Allies.

Cobalt is another strategic metal, the Congo production of which is 60% of the world total.

## Production of Belgian Congo Diamonds exceeds Half of World Total

Diamonds are abundant in the Belgian Congo, the first diamond being found in 1907 in the Kasai province. Systematic prospecting in the following years disclosed the existence of large mines in at least seven districts, the richest being the Kasai, whence most of the Belgian Congo diamonds come today.

Most of the diamonds found in the Belgian Congo vary between one-tenth and one-twelfth of a carat, and an important part of the production is of the industrial quality, so-called "boart."

For the last few years, the Belgian Congo has been the largest producer of diamonds in the world. In 1937, that production was 5,059,927 carats valued at some 50 million dollars and represented 56.6% of the total world production.

The Belgian Congo diamonds are sold through an international syndicate operating in London, but most of the diamonds are cut in Antwerp mainly for export, the United States taking, in normal times, 85% of that exportation.

*Native pottery worker  
from Yambuya.*













*Landing place at the Lukolela plantation.*

## 100,000 Tons of Palm Oil Produced Yearly in the Belgian Congo

The *Elaeis* palm tree originated in Guinea, but it also grows wild throughout Central Africa. In the Belgian Congo it covers a very wide area.

There are different ways of profiting from the *Elaeis* palm tree. The first consists of buying the fruit from the natives. This is done in certain parts of the Congo which are rich in natural palm groves. Some private interest sets up a small factory near a railroad or river, buying the fruit from the natives and exporting oil and almonds. This is an easy and cheap method.

The second method consists in working a concession comprised of a large area covered with palms. These forests of palms are usually old and the ages of the trees vary greatly.

The third method of profit is by cultivation of the *Elaeis* on a regular plantation.

The production of palm almonds is estimated as a minimum of 250 pounds per acre.

Production and the quality of oil which comes from the fleshy part of the fruit, vary according to the method of extraction.

The natives, with their primitive methods of extraction, obtain only a relatively small percentage: 10 to 12%, whereas with modern processes the oil yield is sometimes as high as 23% or 24% of the weight of the fruit. Two tons of fruit can produce 1,000 pounds of palm oil.

The native methods of extraction generally consist in pounding the fruit thus crushing the oily pulp. The matter obtained is boiled, and the impurities separated off. The nut is then broken by hand and the palm almond extracted.

Modern methods consist in passing the fruits through a depulper when hot. The "magma" is then sent through a press.

The quality of the oils, and particularly of those oils produced by native processes, is of great commercial importance.

Palm oil production in the Congo amounts to more than 110,000 tons per year.

*Palm oil factory at Leopoldville.*



*A forest with oil palms, near Ganda.*





Natives put on their most picturesque dresses when bringing cotton to the local market.



# One Million Acres of Cotton Plants

The Congo cotton growing belt will no doubt expand in the future, thanks to the adaptability of the cotton plant. Already the cotton fields have spread to the north of the equator in the Uele and in the Ubanghi, to the south of the line in the Maniema, in the Sankuru, the Kasai, the Lomami, the Tanganyika.

The state follows the evolution of this culture very actively and closely. The societies are interested in it. They grant bonuses to the best farmers: tools, salt, or money.

The surface under cultivation is evaluated at one million acres, which shows an average output of 275 pounds of cotton seed per acre.

There is a progressive improvement of the quality, such

that from now on the Congo cotton will be particularly appreciated in the spinning mills and carded wool spinning mills.

As a general rule, the Congolese cotton resembles the Good Middling standard, with a length of fiber varying on the average from 26 to 30 millimeters.

The Belgian Congo produces various fibers, including sisal, Urena Lobata, jute and banana fiber. The output of sisal alone exceeds 1,000 tons a year.

Natural silk is another product to which much attention is being given. It is expected that, by an increase of 400% of production, the Belgian Congo will soon make up for some of the shortage caused by the war with Japan.

*Young housewife  
winnowing flour.*



*Cooking at the  
"Water Village."*









# Timber from 275 Million Acres of Forests

The forest area, or rather the area of the Congolese forests, is not precisely determined. If it be but a simple estimate based on clearly settled boundaries, but not taking the "glades", very often considerable, into account, or the accidents of the ground which can greatly reduce the global estimate, one could quote an acceptable figure of between 275 and 375 million acres.

The woods of the Belgian Congo are classed in five categories: (1) Ordinary carpentering wood for building and paneling purposes. (2) Wood for fine carpenter's work, cabinet maker's work, and furnishing. (3) Ornamental wood. (4) Woods for work requiring a high degree of resistance. (5) Diverse woods.

The first are the limba and the kambala.

The limba is one of the finest trees of the Mayumbé: a very straight trunk, height often reaching to 1,200 feet, and having a diameter of from 40 to 90 feet. It is a magnificent wood, which enjoys an ever-increasing success, especially for furniture making, wall paneling, the paneling of railway carriages, of ships, and for all kinds of veneers.

The kambala is notable especially for its imputrescence, which gives it value as a building timber. It replaces the teak wood in naval construction.

Among the woods classed in the cabinet making section, let us mention: the Entandophragma (tchimaye), a dark red mahogany, very resistant; the Lifaki (Entandophragma congoense), pink mahogany; the Kalungi, reddish and flowery. All three are easily workable, polishable and have a satin-like appearance.

Under the third heading, decorative woods, let us name the Wenga, which has justifiably been called the rosewood of the Congo. It is black, streaked with brown. It supplies magnificent surfaces when used for veneering, and furniture makers take full advantage of its beauty. There are also the Mubamgu, the Lusamba, the pterocarpus and the Diospyrus, these last being termed coral wood and ebony respectively.

In the timbers requiring a high degree of resistance, one should name the Limbali, imputrescent, and which serves splendidly for pile work in booms because it bears the immersions and emersions without harm.

Production of copal is increasing rapidly and averages 20,000 tons a year, a useful addition to the Allies supply of this essential war product.

*A Congo teak.*

*Top of trunk of a Kalungi.*







## Rubber a Future Source of Wealth

It is recognized today that throughout the equatorial region of the Belgian Congo the climate and the sun are suitable for the growing of Hévéa, a rubber of the highest quality. These plantations today extend over more than 12,500 acres and production is already 1,000 tons a year.

In the culture of Hévéa lies the greatest future of the Congo. The suggestion has been well made that plantation of Robusta coffee be undertaken along with that of Hévéa. Robusta is planted between the furrows and begins to produce at the end of three years. The period of waiting for returns on Hévéa is shortened and production is the fields increased, while the ever present danger of monoculture is avoided.

Still other products include ivory (150,000 tons a year) beeswax, skins and hides, of which important quantities are exported, pyrethrum, etc.

*Rubber trees of the Belgian Congo.*





*Coffee plantation in the Ituri region.*

Coffee originated in Africa; from time immemorial the Gallas (Abyssinians) used coffee as both food and drink. Bean and pulp were boiled together. In the 15th century, the Arabs began to cultivate coffee. In the 16th century, it was already being used as a drink in Cairo and from there it spread through Syria, Damascus, Aleppo, and then throughout Europe.

When the Congo was occupied by the Belgians, several species of wild coffee trees were discovered in the equatorial forest regions. Their importance was so great that the idea was conceived of establishing plantations of these trees and of experimenting with coffee trees from Arabia, Liberia, and other provinces.

When Belgium took over the Congo, the government established at Lula, near Stanleyville, an experimental plantation of coffee trees covering more than 300 acres where Congolese and other trees were treated in various ways. Larger experimental stations now exist.

Since such high regions of the Belgian Congo as Kivu and Haut-Ituri have been recognized as particularly propitious for the culture of fine Arabian coffee, plantations have greatly expanded. Their produce is mainly sold in Katanga and South Africa, while a certain proportion goes normally to Belgium and the London market.

Weight varies greatly by the acre. In general it is around 1,000 pounds per acre for the Robusta variety.

In the lower colonial regions, the plantations are mainly Robusta; this species is extremely hardy and gives high returns. It is well accommodated to the hot climate of the equatorial regions.

As for the coffees of the Arabic group, whose quality is superior to the Robusta, they are best cultivated in higher, cooler levels, such as in the neighboring region of the African Great Lakes as well as in the central part and in southern Katanga.

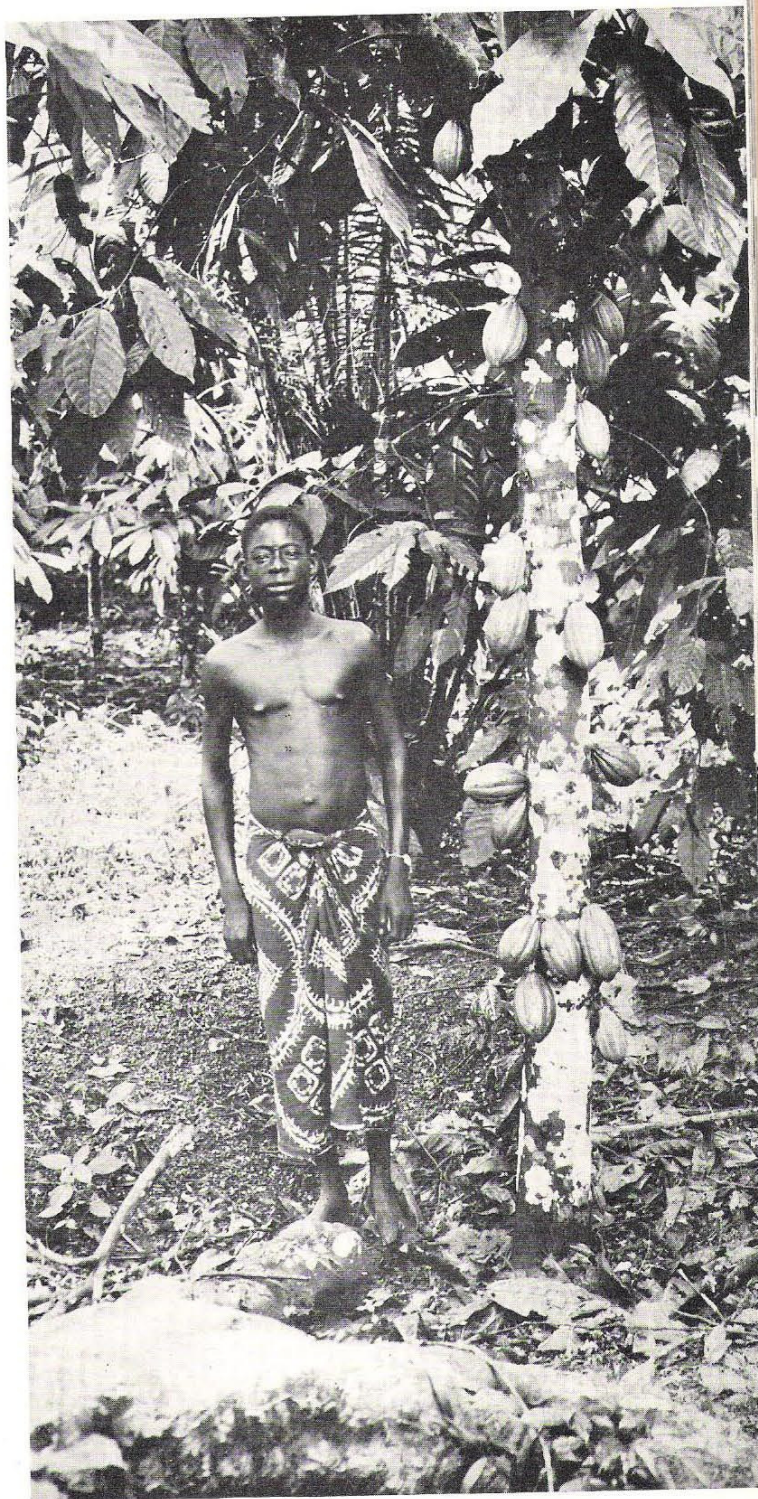
Coffee production today is about 20,000 tons per year.

At the same time the Congo produces 1,500 tons of cocoa per year.

Other products of the Belgian Congo include white maize (28,000 tons of exports a year); manioc (4,000 tons); sugar (14,000 tons) and even small quantities of tea.

# 20,000 Tons of Coffee

*Cocoa tree of the Lukolela plantation.*





# Cattle, Pride of the Ruanda Urundi Districts

*Cattle is especially important in the Ruanda-Urundi districts where three million heads are to be found. In the other Congolese districts, the total number of cattle does not exceed 500,000 but cattle raising is greatly encouraged by the Belgian Congo authorities.*



*A familiar scene in the Urundi.*

*Choice cattle of the Ruanda.*





# "Genuine Congo Native Art is Never Vulgar"

The first pioneers came back to Europe laden with the treasures of the *Africa Tenebrosa*. Ivory, leopard and lion skins, arrows, spears, fetishes and musical instruments were

collectors of exotic curiosities. Masks and figures, arms, and carved tools, basket-work and clothes were studied, compared, classified according to their tribal origin. The religious, military or domestic meaning of every single object was explained by learned men who soon were able to write exhaustive books on the subject.

But it never came to the mind of these early researchers that a Negro mask or a carved drum could possibly be considered as a "thing of beauty." The delicate *rafia* embroideries, the textiles woven of coco-palm fibre in elaborate patterns by the Ba Kuba natives, were examined as to their function in domestic life, just as if they were kudu horns or zebra skins.

Negro art was discovered by European artists. About the year 1905, such young painters as Picasso, Derain, Matisse and Vlaminck, the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, the sensitive art-dealer Paul Guillaume, were the first to realize the profound plastic seriousness of African sculpture. They revealed the dramatic elements, devoid of any picturesque anecdotal quality or exoticism for exoticism's sake, that lay hidden in the mysterious faces of masks and fetishes. And very soon, the influence of their discovery became apparent in their own works.

Since that time, the Ethnographical Museum of the Belgian Congo, created in 1897 in Tervueren (Brussels), by the foresighted genius of Leopold II, became the most important European center for the study of African art. The collections, arranged and classified by the first director of the Museum, Baron Alphonse de Haulleville, finally contained the finest examples of Negro craftsmanship as well as the most touching and significant statues ever carved in wood by the black race.

\* \* \*

The study of the evolution of the fine arts is generally based on previous historical studies. The history of art can only develop as a consequence of general history. In the case of African art, the only documents left are these very works of art that were, for decades, considered as mere "documents." There exists no such thing as a regular history of non-Mediterranean Africa. All we know about the empires of Benin, Yoruba, Melle and Lunda is legendary or so fragmentary that it cannot possibly give us an understanding of Africa's historical evolution. This is the chief reason why the "discovery" of Negro art is due to creative artists and not to historians or other scholars.

heaped in decorative piles, resembling the cartouch of Baroque architecture. Naturalists and ethnologists were eager to share the major spoils, leaving the less important pieces to

*Bakuba sculpture.*



*Bakuba sculpture.*







A curious consequence of their revelation was to clear Leopold II and the early Belgian pioneers of the charge of having destroyed native culture. It was established in fact that, already in the XVIIIth century, Negro art was falling into a decline from some obscure, internal cause. The most perfect specimens of sculptures and carving were executed, as was proved by oral tradition and by comparison with later work, between the beginning of the XVIIth and the second half of the XVIIIth century.

\* \* \*

Not all parts of the immense Belgian empire were equally favored as to artistic development. Although the Wa Reggo region, north of Lake Tanganyika, and the Basonge, between the Congo River and the Lomami, have given birth to an abundant and valuable artistic production, it is in the basin of the Kasai, the most important tributary stream on the left bank of the Congo, that African art attained its highest achievements. Two tribes or nations, the Ba Kuba and the Ba Luba are still active in creating wonderful decorative art, ornamented tools, spoons, bobbins, head-rests and musical instruments, which however



*Bela Lulua statuettes.*



only reflect the past splendor of the Bushongo kingdom that flourished in the region inhabited by the Ba Kuba from the XVth till the XVIIIth century. As was pointed out by H. Clouzot and A. Level, Bushongo art did not entirely spring from religious feeling: It is laic, domestic, familiar. The decorative themes of the fibre weaver and the basket maker passed into the craftsmanship of the woodcarver. Hence the rich and varied compositions of stylized geometrical elements that embellish the simplest utensil. In Ba Luba art, the patterns of surface decoration are simpler, more naturalistic and at the same time more architectonic. The masks, used in ritual ceremonies are impressive with a sort of baroque grandeur.

A particular Ba Kuba mask, the Bombo, is believed to represent the stylization of a Pygmy's face. The dwarf-race, driven centuries ago from the parklands into the depth of woods and marshes, has acquired a kind of magic prestige in the minds of the far more civilized tribes.

A dynasty of Bushongo kings has been immortalized in a series of wooden statues. The natives, perhaps on the grounds of ancestor-worship, have hidden the images of their



*Kasai-Lulua statuettes.*



Warega mask.



rulers from eager European investigators. The six sculptures that have been found up to the present day are certainly among the finest examples known of non-religious art in early civilizations. For sheer majesty and serenity expression, for the intensity and sensitiveness of the artist's feeling, they can be compared to many Egyptian or Mesopotamian works of the archaic period.

The statue of Mikobe Mbula (end of the XVIth century?) that belongs to the Museum of Tervueren can be considered a unique example of conscious craftsmanship and expressive skill. The image is carved in a dark reddish wood. The king is represented seated on a throne, with naked chest and shoulders, stretching out his left hand towards a tiny figure seated at his feet, probably his favorite

wife. The oral tradition claims that Mikobe was a ruler who advocated the emancipation of women.

\* \* \*

Is the Ba Kuba artistic production the result of spontaneous generation, or has it been influenced—as well as the Wa Regga—by some foreign cultural currents? This problem remains still unsolved. In the case of the bronze ornaments of British Benin, the supposition of a European, namely Portuguese, influence, is nearly abandoned today. But the hypothesis of a Continental penetration of culture through the Sudanese countries (that never broke the contact with Egypt) seems to be more generally favored now.

At any rate, the origin of the Kasai artistic production is not entirely religious. Father Aupiais, a learned missionary, suggests three possible sources of artistic creation. One is the symbolism and the metaphoric language used by the population, which is “translated” into a plastic element. The royal chair of the Batschiok king, illustrating the “toils and days” of an agricultural people is a kind of *Shield of Achilles*, and so are the batons of the chiefs of the Kasai regions. On the other hand, the carving of figures would be considered as a sort of *unwritten history*: this would be the case of the effigies of the Ba Kuba kings, authentic *monuments* in the modern sense of the word. Finally, there might be a desire to alter the human figure for some ritual or superstitious reason: this would explain the abundance and variety of masks.

The distinctions made by Father Aupiais, although ingenious, do not give a satisfactory answer to the problem of spontaneous artistic activity. Mr. J. Maes, director of the Ethnographical section of the Tervueren Museum, is perhaps nearer to the truth when he says that “the Negro artist finds his source of inspiration in his family, social or religious customs, the fountainhead of all African art.”

\* \* \*

“I think I never saw a genuine Negro object that was vulgar,” writes the English critic Clive Bell. And he praises the exquisiteness of quality that is its most attractive characteristic. Touching an African figure reminds one of the rarest Chinese porcelain. One can also recognize in craftsmanship work an extraordinary intuitive knowledge of the human body. A tool, a sword, a musical instrument are always perfectly adapted to the form of the hand; a headrest to the shape of the human neck; a chair to the restful position of the whole body. This is verified in the purely decorative and applied art still practiced in many regions of the Belgian Congo.

The Negro races may have no history, or may have lost their history. Their artistic creations have bequeathed us the unforgettable legend of their mysterious past.





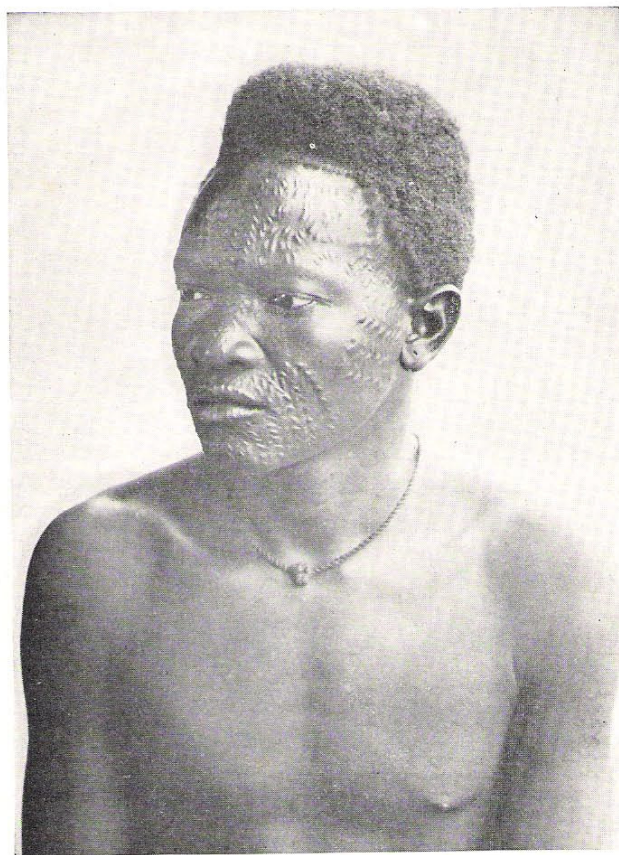


# Tattoos, an ancestral language

Disfiguration of the flesh was, in the beginning of white penetration in Africa, a sort of ancestral language, a mark of lineage.

In the ethnographic domain, these distinctions had long been put to profit; they might have been a conventional alphabet in raised dots—a sort of Braille method designed to aid a still blind people. Certain Congolese tribes, long in contact with the white man, still hold to the practice of their ancestors; others, on the contrary, modify them according to their degree of civilization, the work they do, and today's necessities. Up to 1914 the boys and girls were compelled to submit to tribal tattooing before reaching puberty. Among equatorial tribes, the Bapoto in particular, the entire body is literally "sculptured." The Mongo and the Mongwandi have their foreheads decorated with protuberances giving an appearance of a jagged ridge. Both sexes of the Basongo-Meno decorate their faces and necks. A number of elliptical scars follow the line of the eyebrows; concentric circles decorate their temples; their bodies' front, back and arms, carry the same stigmata. The Bushongo, both men and

*A Budja tattooed woman.*



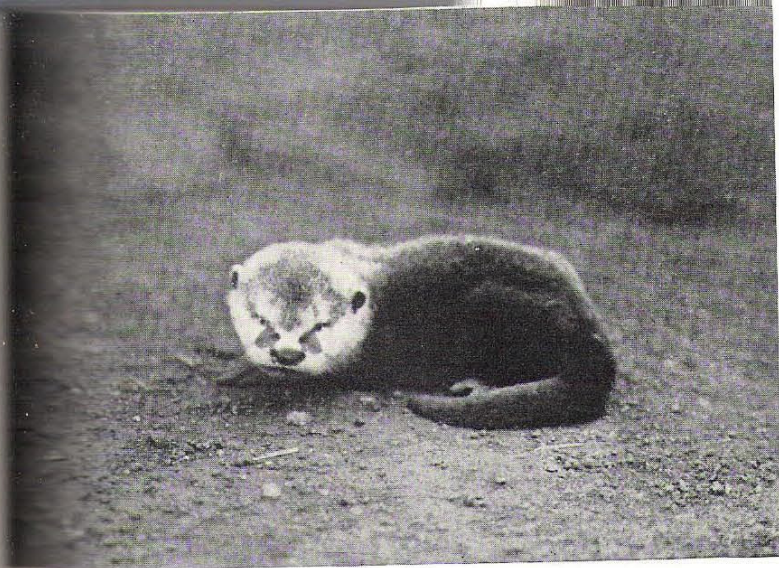
*A Lissala tattooed native.*

women, also have the "visa" of their tribe on their temples: this is composed of three elliptical scars, reproduced three times, while in the Bangongo tribe only three concentric circles can be seen. The Bangendi trace two straight lines from each eye to the center of the forehead. Bambala men wear ornamental cuts on their shoulders and their wives cover their stomachs with various geometrical designs. Some Negro women embellish their throats with cuts simulating a necklace. The Waregas wear a "V" made in tiny dots on their foreheads. The same design, enlarged, is repeated on their backs.

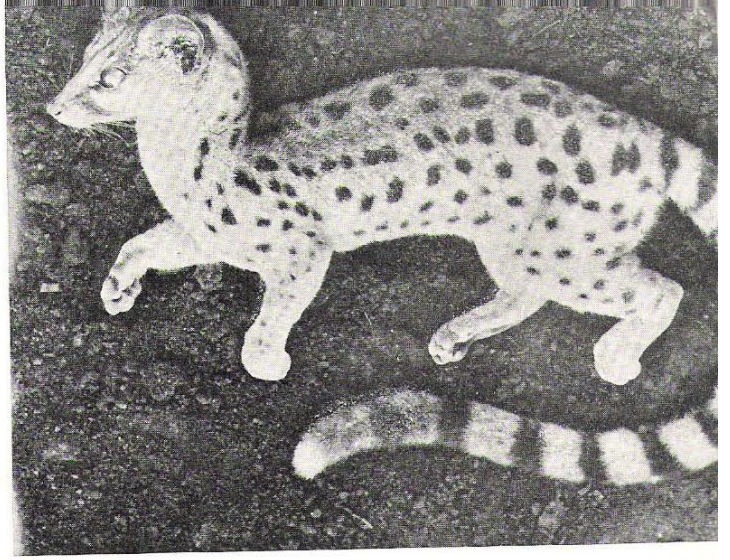
The Wasongola have a raised bar of flesh on their forehead six or seven millimeters from the base of the nose, to the hair.

Two parallel arcs paralleling the eyebrows is the "signature" of the Bapopoies. It is generally between the seventh and the tenth year that the blacks submit their progeny to the exigencies of this custom. The tattoo knife is a little splayed steel blade with a very sharp rounded edge. The women perform the operation. The patients are seated; the surgeon traces with clay the designs to be cut on the body, then pinches the skin between thumb and forefinger of the right hand and cuts with a quick pull of the blade. The wound is filled with a fine powder of pulverized charcoal and other ingredients which serve to hinder the natural healing of the flesh. This operation is repeated three or four times, according to the height of the scar desired. Tattooing to increase feminine beauty is not limited to any special years; it is not unusual to see very old women having new ornamental designs traced on them.





*A toeless otter of the Congo.*



*A Congo Genetta*

## Belgian Congo an ideal country

*Amaryllid flower growing  
in virgin forests.*



*A Congo Bush Baby.*

## for tourists and big game hunters

*Giant orchids growing  
on tree-trunks.*



The Belgian Congo, with its endless variety of aspects, is one of the most attractive and interesting countries for the tourist. Comfortable traveling, roads which rank among the best in Africa, and modern industrial installations amid the wonderful tropical scenery, have not in any way deprived the Congo of the charm of native life in the heart of what, not long ago, was still the "mysterious black continent."

The most unexpected contrasts are found in the Belgian Congo. Vegetation of an astounding variety and vitality: on the very borders of the great equatorial forest grow the alpine species on the slopes of the Ruwenzori range, whose peaks are capped with eternal snow; while primeval flora is a feature of the lava fields in Albert National Park.

The "Nyamuragira" volcano is worthy of a special mention. In full activity, its lava streams flow into Lake Kivu and, especially at night time, it is an amazing picture of majestic beauty.





Scenic falls are numerous in the Congo.



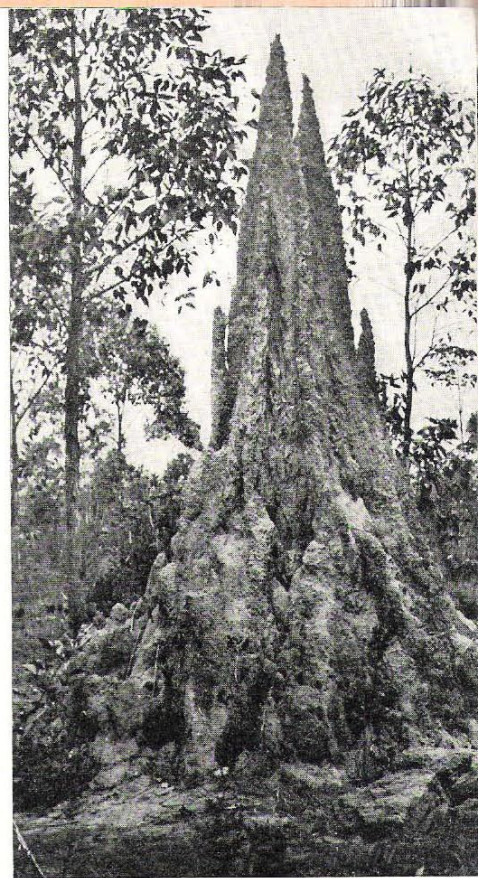


*mushroom-shaped termite.*

Fauna abounds in a surprising and rich variety, ranging from the smallest humming bird to the rhinoceros, the hippo, and the mighty elephant, and comprising the gorilla and the okapi, rarest of animals. This very variety makes the Belgian Congo an ideal for big game hunters.

While traveling in the Belgian Congo, one may see, in the same day, the Pygmies, dwarfs of the forest, and the Watuzi, a noble looking race of giants, masters of wide stretching pasture lands and of large herds of cattle.

First class hotels may be found everywhere and the courtesy of the local authorities is tireless.



*A common Congo termite.*

*The Ruwenzori a 16,000 feet high mountain*







stampede, spectacular and wild.



Congo elephants travel only in large packs.

*Hippopotami are found in many Congo rivers.*





# The Mysterious Okapi

In the furthest and most mysterious depths of the immense Iturian forest lives the aristocrat of African animals. Fiercely independent, courageous and unpredictable, it has shown itself to very few men in its prehistoric domain.

A member of the giraffe family, its body reminds one of an antelope and its legs are banded like a zebra's. Its long, narrow head is a deep red, blending into black over the muzzle and into reddish grey to silver over the jowls. Its great ears are beautifully fringed with black. The animal's back is deep black, its flanks and belly red. The magnificent ebony bands on a brilliant white background, bordered here and there with brown, are met just above the knee by a stocking of immaculate snowy whiteness, with a bracelet of jet at the ankle.

No one, until he has had the chance to see this strange animal in its own habitat, can imagine the impression it makes as it walks through the virgin forest. Its curious drunken gait, its size, its strength, its extraordinary decisiveness, give it the appearance of having just emerged from a distant past.

The delicacy of the Okapi has already been mentioned, but the meticulous care with which it tends its precious coat is truly remarkable. In fact, its fastidiousness constitutes its most striking characteristic. Rain, falling drops from trees, a splash of grayish or reddish forest mud irritate it beyond all measure; these seem to be the only things it really fears and tries to avoid at all costs.

During the day and sometimes at night, the Okapi zealously bathes itself, licking the furthest spot of its fur that its long, blue tongue can reach: fifteen and a half inches long, it folds and turns like a snake and when its sinuous neck twists back parallel to its body, the Okapi's tongue can easily reach its tail.

Before dawn, it is already bathing alone in one of the thousand jungle pools, for the Okapi never runs in a herd or travels with another animal. Its toilet over, it sets off where its smell and extraordinary keen hearing tell it may be found the quietest spot for pasture, and where it seeks out its favorite foods: little pulpy flowers, young juicy shoots, perfumed herbs—every green which goes to make up a heavenly salad for a gourmet.

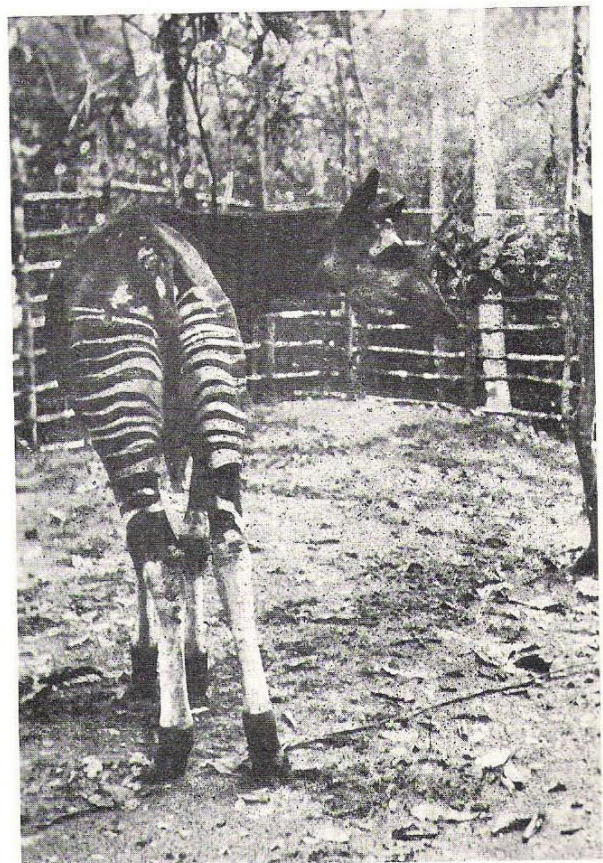
The delicate fur covers a skin of incredible thickness—almost three-tenths of an inch—a veritable suit of armor.

Once, a grown captured animal shook the entire length of a heavy fence with a kick of its leg and knocked down a part of it with a blow of its head. At another time, a young Okapi was led into the enclosure of a water buffalo. This heavy African animal, with its long cruel curving horns, towered over the insignificant little creature, ten times smaller and lighter than she. Then, seeming to understand that this young one had usurped the place of her

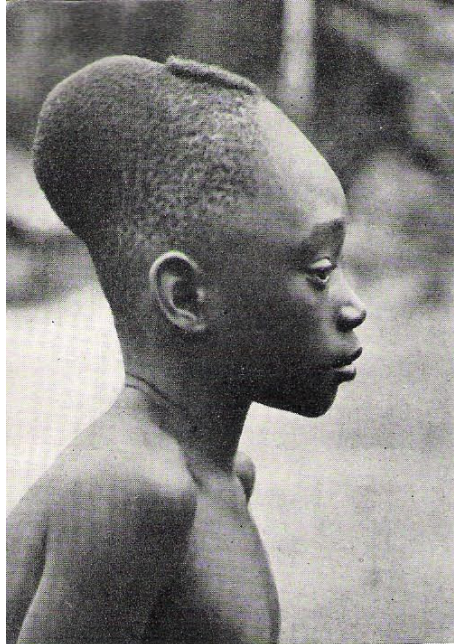
calf, she suddenly charged, head on. The brave Okapi watched that thundering attack descend upon it without budging an inch and with an air of supreme indifference. It was merely following the tradition of its elders who, in the depths of their forest, confront and vanquish the buffalo, the only animal who would dare attack an Okapi. The good-natured elephant, like the gorilla, maintains an easy neutrality, and the fierce leopard will attack a young but not an adult animal.

A curious characteristic is the animal's enormous eyes, which roll over a very large surface and whose vision is abnormally keen. When it is at rest, these eyes are tender and appealing, but the slightest noise or irritation brings something hard, icy, and strangely shocking to the expression, which has a terrifying effect upon the Negroes. At the same time it utters a weird sound: a sort of neighing and a loud grinding of teeth.

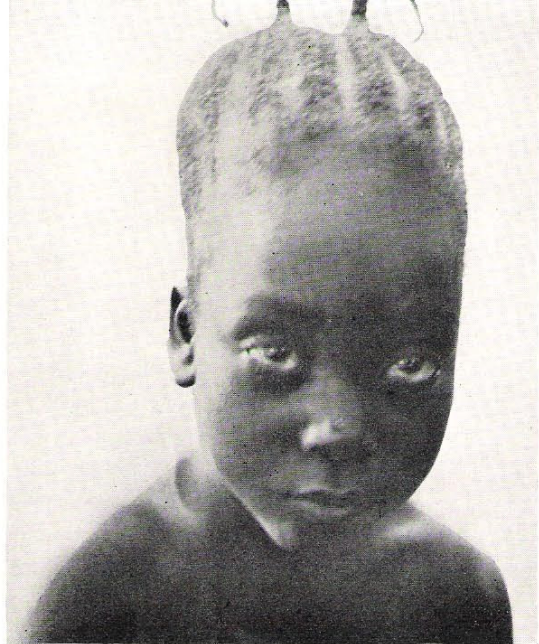
The animal can travel, from sun to sun, more mileage than a man can cover in a week. At twilight, it sets out to find a pleasant spot to spend the night in, dry, clean, a little elevated and protected from the rain. It changes its resting place every day, unless there are young ones.



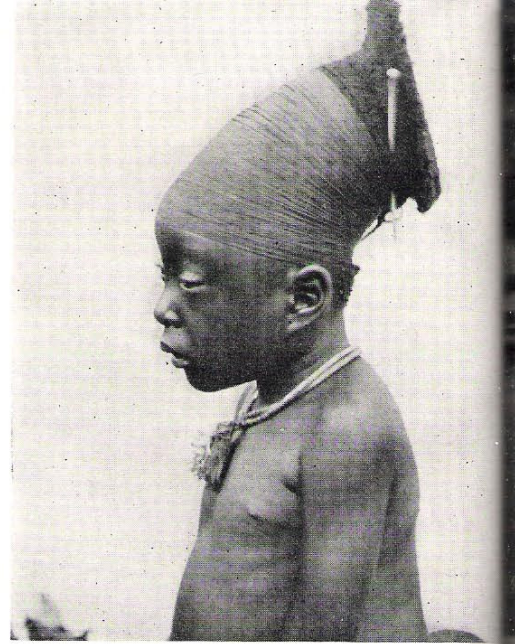




Manzebetu boy.



Azandi child.



Manzebetu girl.

## Congo...

—Don't complain about your job, you might not have any.  
 —A tree cannot make any noise if it has no leaves.  
 —When the hammer is left in inexperienced hands, it is used only to break coconuts.  
 —It is not enough to eat well, one must also look forward to a place to sleep in.  
 —All of us have a nose bent towards the ground.  
 —Ears may grow big but they will never be larger than the head.  
 —The proprietor of the chicken has the right to eat the wing.  
 —When two people meet in a business discussion, neither of the two can possibly place himself in the middle.  
 —If one takes you by the hand, you may be saved; but if one takes you by the tongue, you are in danger.



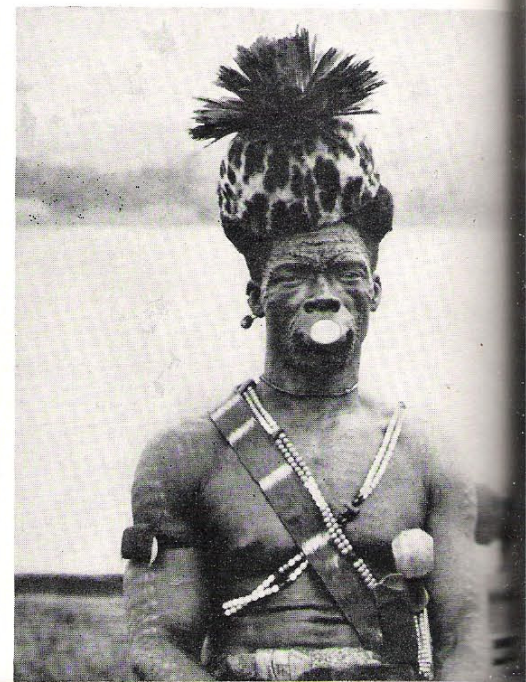
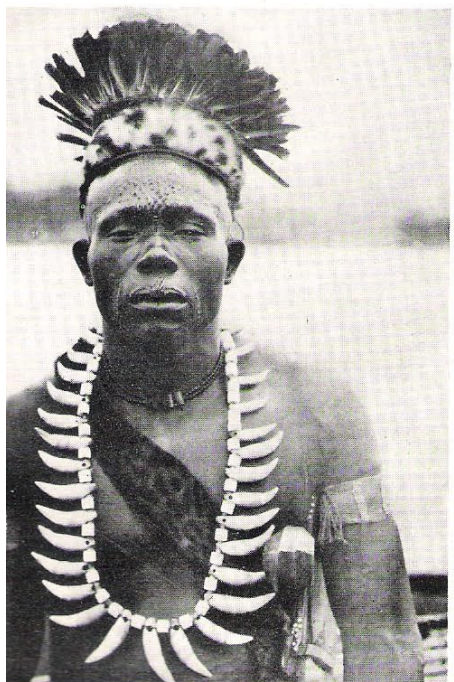
Watusi Prince.

A native ruler:  
Sultan Lubanga.



Watusi Prince.

A chief of the  
Nya Lukolela tribe.







Native children delight in parades.



Central  
Congo worker.

## ...Proverbs

*—A son cannot have the same head-dress as his father for he has not the same head.*

*—Only when you use a tool can you earn enough to buy a new one.*

*—It is useless work to empty holes once they have been filled.*

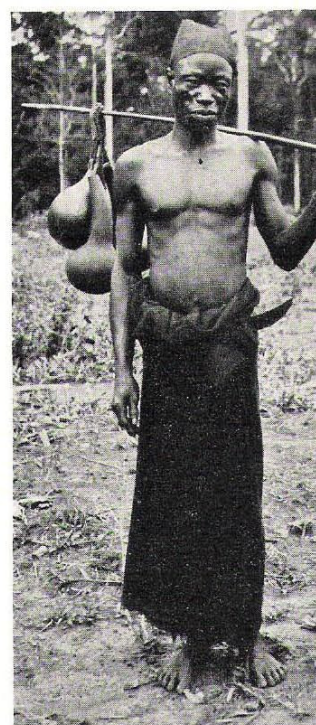
*—When two people have a difference, a third party should not be brought in unless he is the next of kin.*

*—Patient hunters don't kill small birds.*

*—When you throw a stone, be not astonished if it makes a noise when falling.*

*—You should pay attention to the way people speak and not to the way they are dressed.*

Calabashes.  
for palm-wine



Uele musical instrument.

The great tam-tam





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The Belgian Congo has an area of 918,000 square miles, that is as much as the combined areas of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon and Montana.

Population: 12,000,000 colored people, 30,000 Whites.

The Belgian Congo is the largest world's producer of radium, cobalt, copal and diamonds; ranks second in the production of copper and palm-oil; and is among the largest producers of gold and tin. The Congo production constitutes an important contribution to the war effort of the Allied Nations.

The Belgian State has invested 60,000,000 dollars in the Belgian Congo; Belgian private undertakings, 300,000,000 dollars.

Even essential perfume oils from flowers are produced in the Belgian Congo, some of which are found on volcanoes at a height of 13,000 ft.

In 1900 there was only one railroad in the Belgian Congo, 170 miles long. Today the Congo railroads extend over 3,500 miles.

Over 200 dialects are spoken in the Belgian Congo, three of which are understood in nearly every district and fifty in a wide area.





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